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OCTOBER 2025

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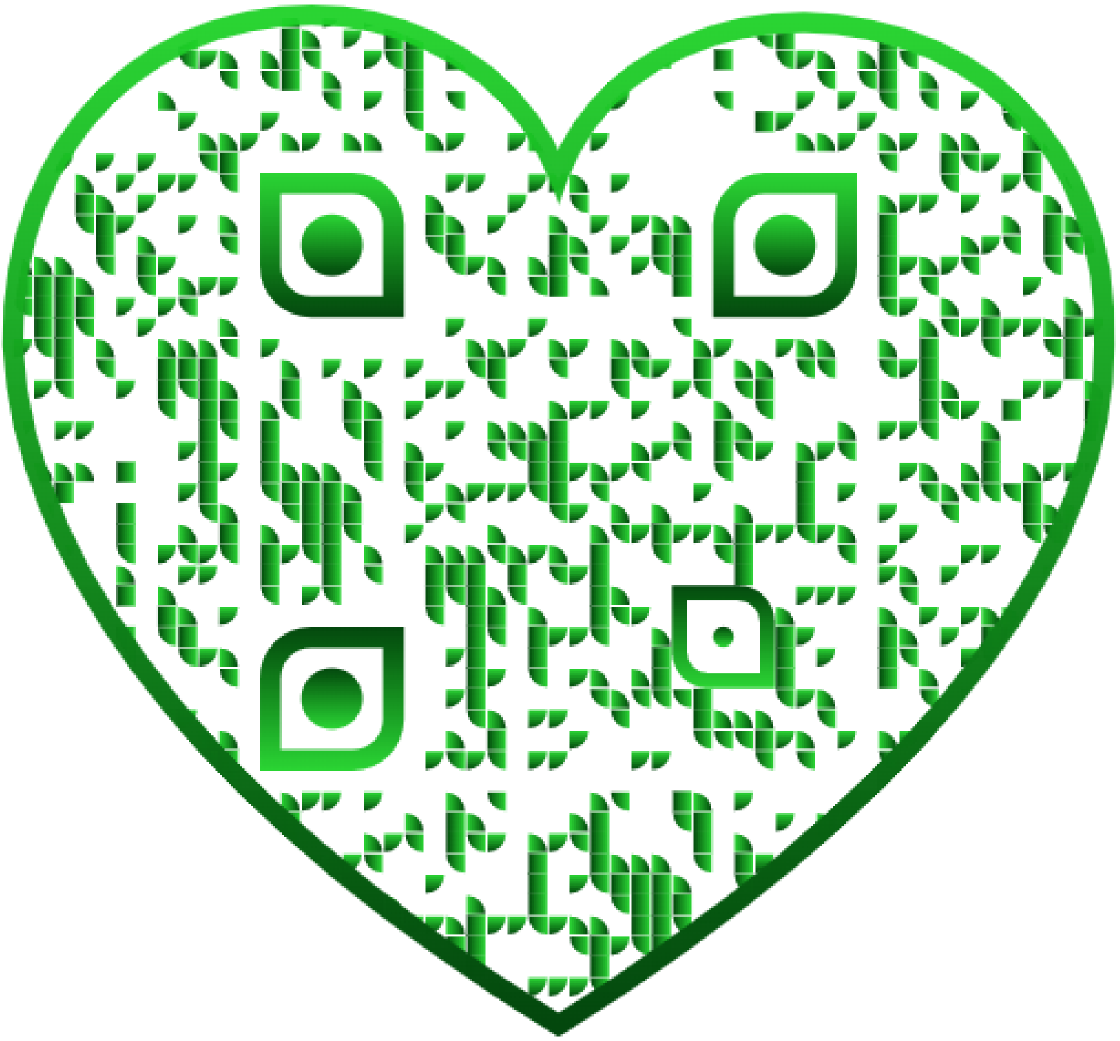
SOPHIE MCNALLY FANNY HOULETTE **MELANIA BELLESINI**

HESTON
BLUMENTHAL



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Seafood Scotland proudly congratulates Oliver McGeorge and the Bocuse d'Or UK team on their outstanding success at the National Selection.

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Adam Wing, *head of trade marketing for UK, Middle East and Asia at Seafood Scotland* and new chairman of Bocuse d'Or UK, commented:

"The National Selection is much more than a competition, i*t's a chance for our best and brightest chefs to share the innovation, culinary heritage and the relentless pursuit of excellence* we know our nation has to offer. Each candidate demonstrated tremendous skill, and we thank everyone who participated in the competition. As we head towards the European Finals in 2026, *I'm feeling inspired and optimistic that we are well and truly within touching distance of the podium."*

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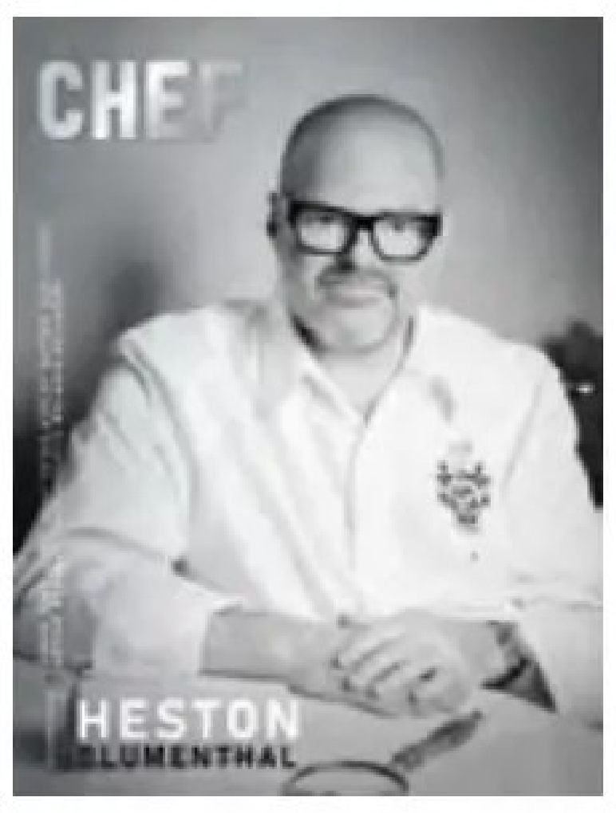
COVER IMAGE
Jodi Hinds



Being asked to guest edit this special edition dedicated to my dear friend, neighbour and fellow chef, Heston, is an honour, a privilege - and a challenge! Like Elvis and Beyoncé, Heston is known on a first-name basis for good reason. He's not just a chef - he's an artist who discovered he could express himself through food. Trying to capture what he means to me, and to the world of gastronomy, is no easy task.

In a world that values certainty, Heston Blumenthal rekindles our sense of wonder. He shows us that food can - and should - make us think, feel and dream. This issue celebrates his journey and his fearless vision: a life spent challenging the status quo, stepping into the unknown and embracing the improbable.

Having spent years training and working in France, I returned to Bray in 1992 to work alongside my father at The Waterside Inn. I already knew the village was special, but I never imagined this peaceful riverside retreat would become home to one of the most inventive minds our industry has ever seen. Heston arrived just three years later, opening The Fat Duck in the old Ringers pub on the High Street. It marked the beginning of something extraordinary, not just for Bray, but for modern gastronomy itself.

It's rare that someone comes along who completely rewrites the rules. Heston didn't just change how we cook; he changed how we think about food. He invited us to dine with all our senses, merging flavour, science, storytelling and nostalgia. He made food theatrical, emotional, even philosophical - but above all, fun.

People often comment how remarkable it is that two three-Michelin-starred restaurants sit within walking distance in a sleepy village of just a few thousand residents. And it is. But even more remarkable is how our two very different restaurants have grown side by side, each inspiring the other. Heston's presence in Bray has never felt like competition - only inspiration.

The Fat Duck has been nothing short of a revolution. My father Michel and I watched with admiration as Heston built his vision from scratch, in awe of his boundless creativity and imagination – he is unafraid to question tradition, always curious. That childlike sense of "what if?" has become his hallmark. Whether serving a dish in a conch shell on a bed of sand with the sound of seagulls and the sea, or a new dessert "Pinot Noir Grape" with more than 20 ingredients and 50 stages in preparation, dishes that take years to develop - every bite is laced with invention, memory and surprise.

I've watched Heston build not just a single restaurant, but a whole culinary world—always staying true to himself. From The Fat Duck to Dinner, from his books to TV, he's opened people's eyes to the boundless possibilities of food. It's no wonder my father and uncle invited him to join the judging panel for The Roux Scholarship in 2006. By then, he was already a close family friend. I still remember first meeting him when he arrived in Bray - unfailingly polite, modest, very cheeky and quietly uncomfortable with praise. He's still the same, nothing has changed ...maybe even cheekier!

Our culinary styles may differ, but we share a background in and deep respect for classical French cuisine. Heston's brilliance lies not just in pushing boundaries, but in mastering the classic French and British techniques and fundamentals first. His success proves that innovation without foundation is meaningless. He also understands the essence of true hospitality: putting the guest front and centre, and building a team around that principle. No one wins or keeps three Michelin stars for 21 years without that humility and clarity of purpose.

Beyond all the accolades, the fame and acclaim, Heston is simply my friend. Across the years, we've shared laughs, more than a few glasses of wine, a friendly rivalry - and most recently and thrillingly, a kitchen. In May, we co-hosted a once-in-a-lifetime dinner at The Waterside Inn to celebrate our shared milestones: 40 years of three Michelin Stars for us, and 30 incredible years of The Fat Duck, including its own 21 years of three stars.

More than the Stars, the evening was a celebration of Heston's extraordinary bravery - both in pursuing his singular culinary vision and, more recently, in speaking openly about his mental health journey with bipolar. His honesty and grace in sharing those struggles helps to destigmatise mental illness and shows another kind of courage entirely.

So, Heston - thank you. For the magic you've brought to Bray, the inspiration you give so many chefs, and most of all, for your friendship.

Here's to the past, the present, and whatever marvellous idea you dream up next.

From one Bray chef to another......

Alain.

Alain Roux

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- Tom Shepherd
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- Clare Smyth MBE

Simon Rogan
MICHELIN
2024
Jason Atherton
MICHELIN
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Tom Shepherd
MICHELIN
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Chef HQ

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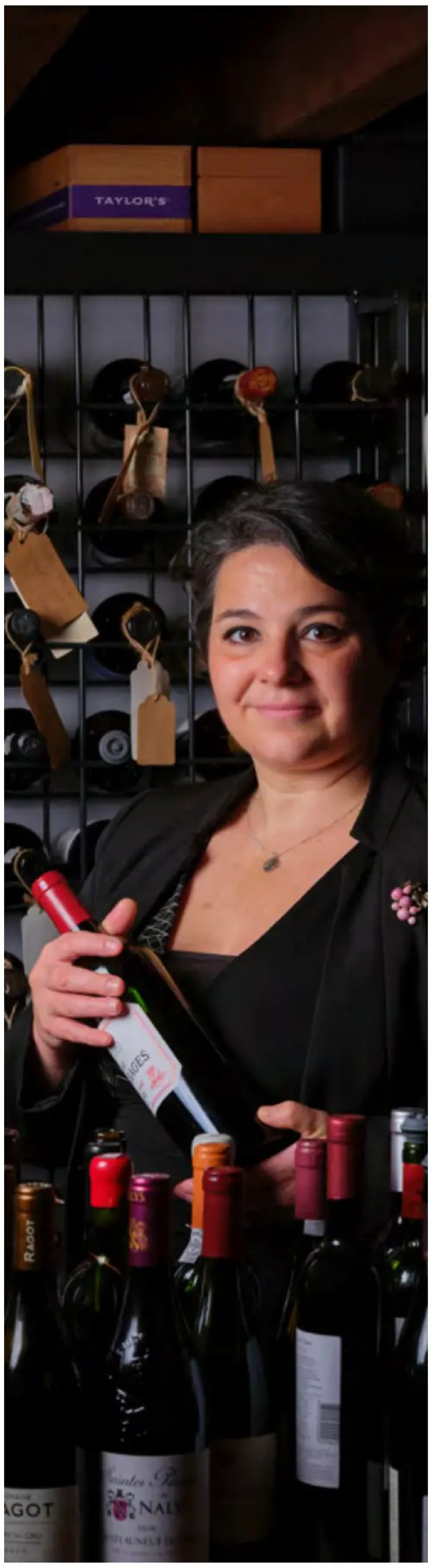

FANNY HOULETTE
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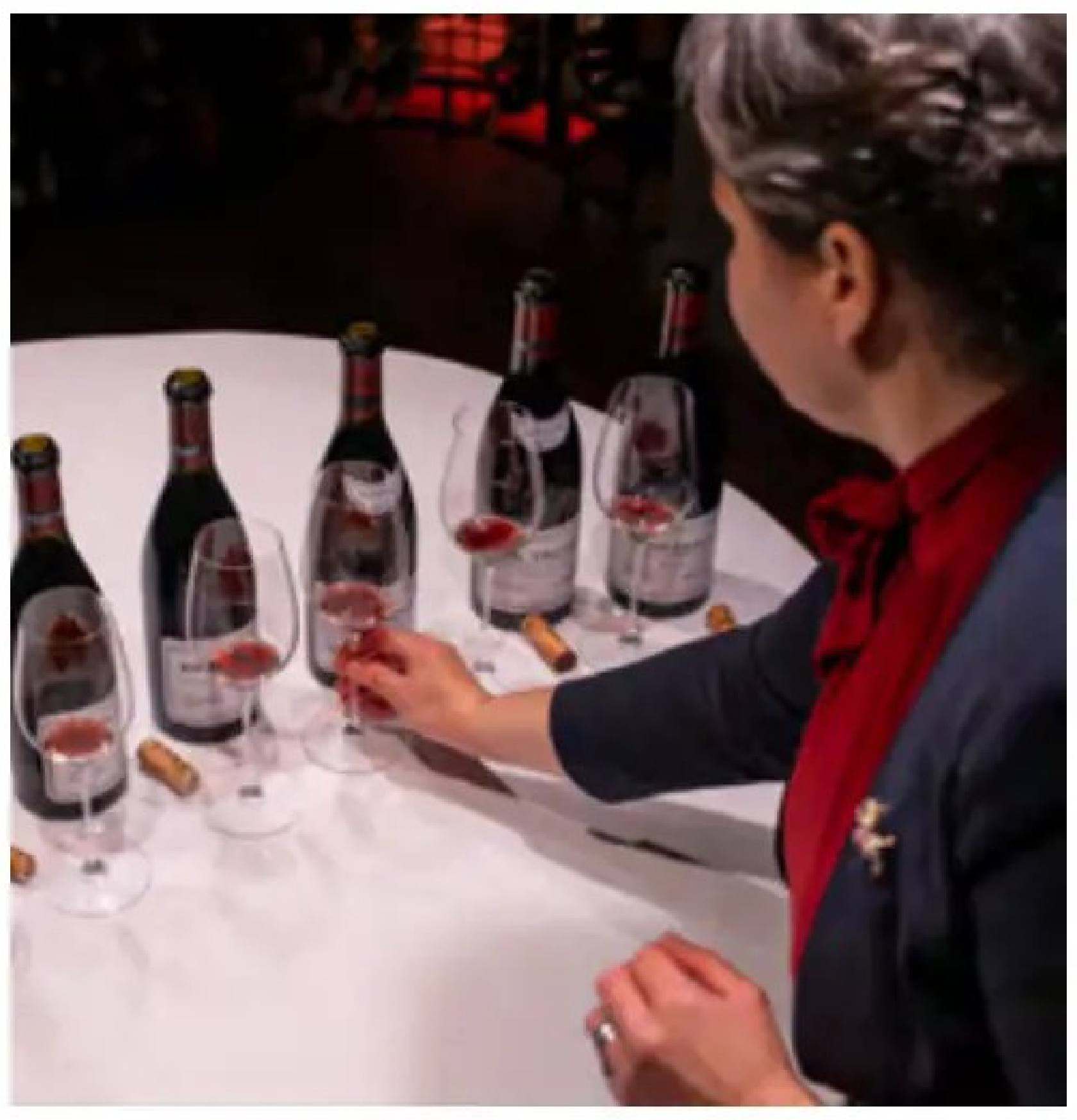

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Bart Polinski, Executive Chef at Delapre Abbey/ Orangery & Hibiscus Restaurant

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Khalil Bouabid, Pastry Chef @ Kayu Mayfair

"I think the new website is a massive improvement. Much easier to check availability and quantity of products, and the user experience is a lot smoother."
Paolo, Head Chef @ Restaurant 1890 by Gordon Ramsay

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All The Fat Duck Interviews
Words Claire Bosi
Camera
Jodi Hinds
Lola Laurent
John Carey
Jose Coimbra
Southworks Creative

The Fat Duck

heston blumenthal

> “I thought, why us? We’ll never keep it. Suddenly, we were a three-star restaurant in a tiny old pub in Bray, with no valet parking, a makeshift kitchen, and a row of sheds out the back.”

HESTON
BLUMENTHAL

BRAY
VILLAGE

IMAGINE THIS.
HALF AN HOUR. THIRTY MINUTES.
1,800 SECONDS. THAT IS HOW
CLOSE THE UK - AND THE WORLD
OF GASTRONOMY - CAME TO
NEVER HEARING THE WORDS:
"THE FAT DUCK AT BRAY."

"I just wanted to cook," Heston begins as we sit down to chat. "I had a certain amount of money and was going to open a restaurant in South Africa. The Rand, at the time, bought you much more than Sterling could. Money went a long way in South Africa. Property was so cheap.

"I was half an hour away from finishing a property purchase. I had found this place in Franschhoek - a thatched house with six bedrooms and enough space for a restaurant. It was amazing. And it was £200,000. The estate was at the centre of a family feud and up for sale. We had exchanged contracts.

"On the day of completion, I was in my dad's office. The phone rang, and I was told the family feud had been resolved. The deal was off."

Thirty years later, it feels impossible that there was a true sliding doors moment - a real chance that The Fat Duck may never have existed. Had Heston gone to South Africa, would we even know who he is today? The country still doesn't have a Michelin Guide, so that level of global recognition would have been out of reach. No three stars (which The Fat Duck has held since 2004). Perhaps no books or TV programmes, no alumni going on to change kitchens across the world, no suppliers of speciality ingredients and equipment whose businesses would thrive thanks to his influence.

And what outlet would there have been for that spirit of curiosity Heston has passed on to others. To question, to challenge, to back themselves. Because even though many see

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ROSETTE AWARD
AA

THE TIMES
Shipman died 'to boost his wife's pension'
From Heston service station to Michelin
How good is your school?
who weep

Heston Blumenthal as a globally recognised figure, a disruptor, and an international businessman — he was once just a chef. Who wanted to cook.

"Thirty years. Sometimes it feels like that, other times it feels quite new. I realise now that I have done a lot, and I think back to those early days of The Fat Duck quite often. Especially how, and with what, the restaurant started. Recently, Melanie and I went to visit Dinner in Dubai. We stood in the kitchens — just one of the four cooking suites in there had cost £275,000. I bought the entirety of The Fat Duck for £250,000."

Contrary to what many people assume when they see the success of Heston Blumenthal and The Fat Duck, the beginnings were humble. After the South African deal collapsed, Heston found a run-down pub in Bray. It was called The Ringers.

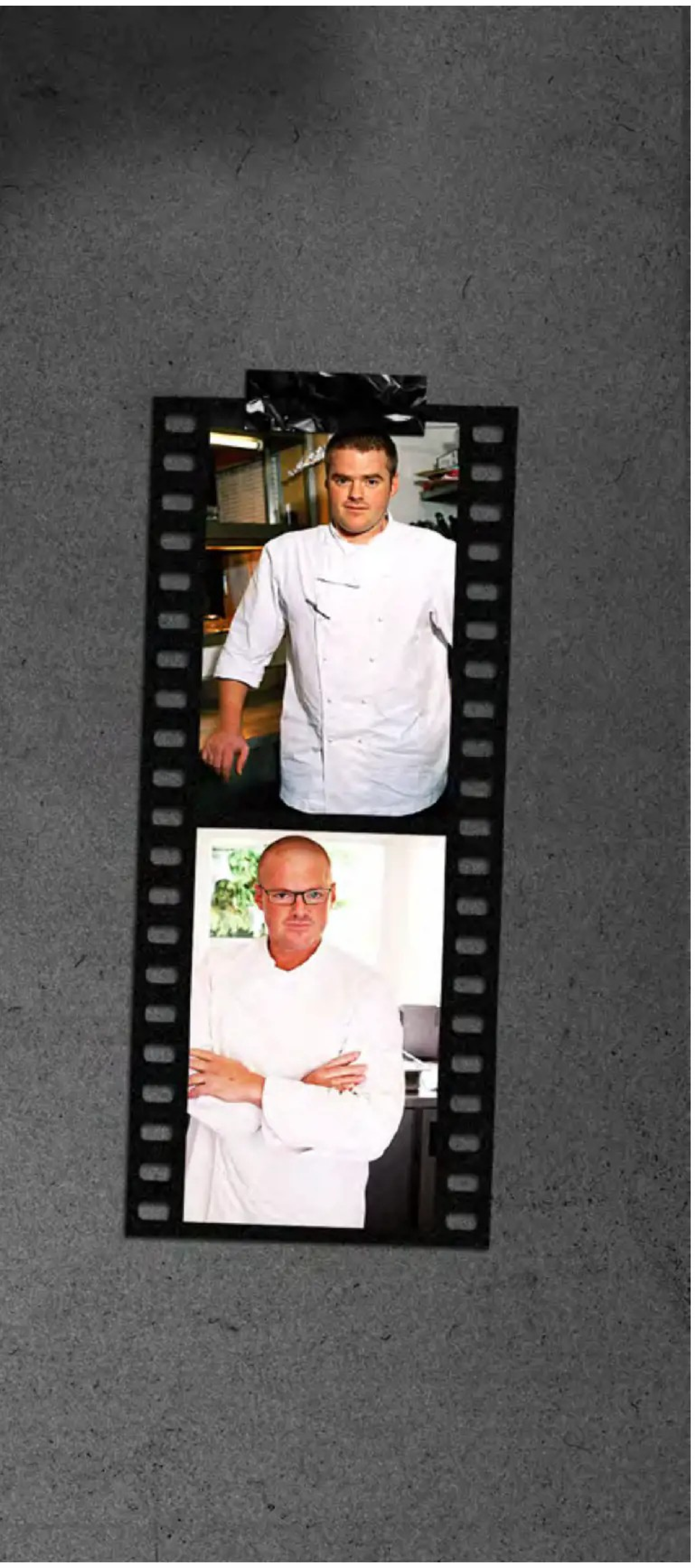
"There was no money for a refurbishment," Heston laughs. "I think I had just shy of £10,000. I remember buying an oven from a second-hand kitchen supply company, under the arches somewhere in Chelsea. It had six gas burners, but only four of them worked, and there was no click from the pilot light.

"One afternoon, I turned the gas on one of the burners, fully intending to light it. The phone rang, so I went out to the bar. It was yet another call asking if The Fat Duck was a Chinese restaurant. I was explaining you could come in for pâté and a pint. I probably rambled for two minutes.

"I went back into the kitchen, struck a match, and poof! The blast picked me up off the floor. I landed sitting on the fridge and started laughing. My 17-year-old kitchen porter – who always wore a baseball cap backwards - was laughing too. Then I smelt burnt hair. I had singed the whole of my head.

"We had eight or 10 people in for dinner that night. My head was too burnt to stand in the kitchen. So, I stood on the other side of the pass with a bag of frozen peas and frozen chips on my head, telling this kid, 'Get that out of that fridge, put that in the oven'. It was the hardest service I've ever done."

Yes — the restaurant famed in later years for having one staff member per customer opened in 1995 with just Heston and a teenage



CHURCH LANE
CUL-DE-SAC
HIGH
STREET

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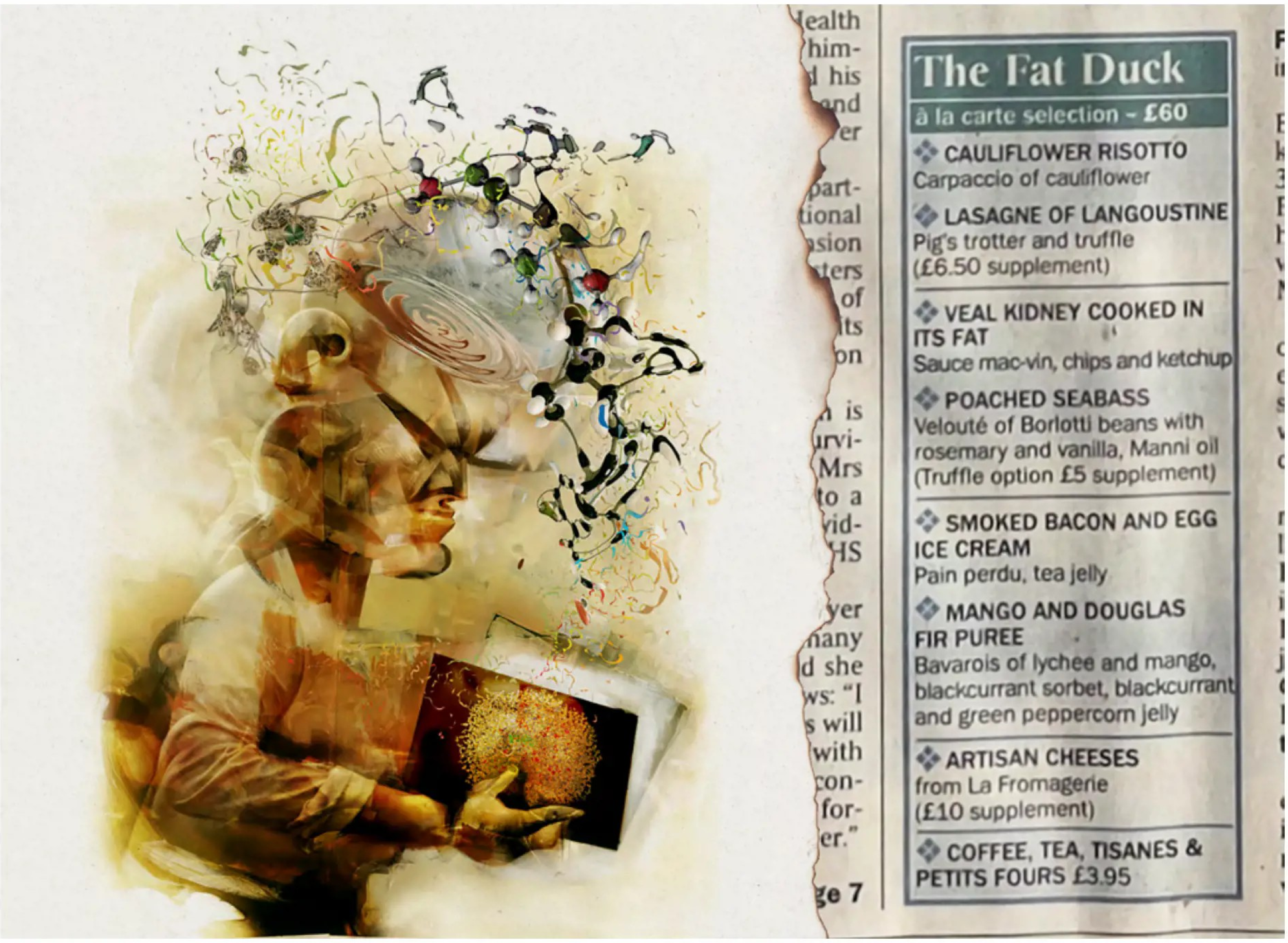

The Fat Duck

à la carte selection – £60

- **CAULIFLOWER RISOTTO**
  Carpaccio of cauliflower
- **LASAGNE OF LANGOUSTINE**
  Pig's trotter and truffle
  (£6.50 supplement)
- **VEAL KIDNEY COOKED IN ITS FAT**
  Sauce mac-vin, chips and ketchup
- **POACHED SEABASS**
  Velouté of Borlotti beans with rosemary and vanilla, Manni oil
  (Truffle option £5 supplement)
- **SMOKED BACON AND EGG ICE CREAM**
  Pain perdu, tea jelly
- **MANGO AND DOUGLAS FIR PUREE**
  Bavarois of lychee and mango, blackcurrant sorbet, blackcurrant and green peppercorn jelly
- **ARTISAN CHEESES**
  from La Fromagerie
  (£10 supplement)
- **COFFEE, TEA, TISANES & PETITS FOURS £3.95**

kitchen porter. And yes, in those early days, the self-taught chef served French bistro food.

"I wrote my first menu the day before opening. Talk about last minute. Starters were £3.50, mains around £10, desserts £2.50. The dishes were things like rillettes, steak and chips, crème brûlée."

With less than a month of professional kitchen experience, Heston suddenly found himself organising a kitchen from scratch.

"It was chaos. I had no clue what I was doing. I literally opened the fridge at the end of service, after cleaning down, and thought: 'What do I need tomorrow?' No list. Zero organisation. I was going down with every service.

"That feeling… I don't know how many times I had it. Your thighs go; your knees are gone. The service is controlling you; you have no control over the service."

And then came the Chef Patron challenge.

"I thought, I've got to do that thing French chefs do. Go out and say hello to tables. I'd seen it, I thought I should try it. I wasn't very good. One service, I walked up to this table of four. I stood there, in my whites, covered in food. It seemed like five minutes; it was probably 20 seconds. Eventually this woman looked up at me and super dismissively said, 'Yes?' Like I was an annoyance.

"I made a point of never visiting tables I didn't know again."

From the start, Heston pushed himself. He had to — the business began and ended with him. Early mornings, late nights, extreme hours.

"I was putting in easily 120 hours a week. I was delirious. I remember trying to portion a side of cod. I looked down, and it was all over the place. I was falling asleep standing up. But I was relentless. Looking back now, I can see my recently diagnosed bipolar and ADHD were a huge part of that obsessive drive. To do more, discover more. And running a restaurant was all new to me. I was constantly learning how to just make it profitable."

Profitable it wasn't, at least not early on. Inspired by Harold McGee (whose book *On Food and Cooking* encouraged him not to take anything for granted) and his own unstoppable curiosity, Heston began to explore taste, aroma, memory and temperature. He introduced unconventional techniques and ingredients, reinventing the menu over time.

Between 1997 and 1999, The Fat Duck evolved from an unassuming French bistro into one of the UK's most daring restaurants. This period marked the foundation of Heston's culinary identity - relentless experimentation, self-education, a gradual shift from tradition toward innovation. The result: a Michelin star in 1999.

HIGH STREET
URCH LANE
CUL - DE - SAC
MICHELIN 2025

Critics took notice. Matthew Fort, then *Guardian* Food & Drink editor, was one of the first to champion him. Others, like Jonathan Meades of *The Times*, were sceptical - but even the criticism validated Heston's scientific, conceptual cooking as something serious.

"The restaurant was becoming noticed, and I started to get good chefs in the kitchen and grow a team. But we still weren't making enough to afford it. One day I was upstairs at my makeshift desk - a piece of plyboard across two filing cabinets - and my accountant told me that, for the first time, the restaurant had made £500.

"Literally at that moment, there was a knock at the door. A guy from Bonnet was delivering my new induction hob. It was £500. My accountant just crossed the numbers off the page and sighed."

Between 1999 and 2001, creativity at The Fat Duck hit a new gear. Flavour pairing by molecular compounds. Sous-vide refinement. Multi-sensory experiences. Dishes like snail porridge and egg and bacon ice cream emerged — provocative, precise, meticulously tested.

By 2002, The Fat Duck had two Michelin stars. Just three years after the first.

The second star catapulted Heston into a new league. The team was driven, ambitious, and experimental. But financially, it was perilous. Operating costs soared. Specialist equipment drained funds. Bills piled up. Insolvency loomed.

Heston left for a speaker event at Madrid Fusión with no cash in the bank to pay his team. He was sketching plans, trying to work out what to do next. It looked likely that his restaurant couldn't survive. And then, on one day in 2004, everything changed.

THE THIRD MICHELIN STAR

"I was invited to Madrid Fusión to deliver a talk on flavour encapsulation, techniques using nitrogen, and flavour pairing. It was very popular – the audience was huge.

"Afterwards, I was approached by Nick Lander, the restaurant correspondent for the *Financial Times*, who suggested we go for lunch. Not long after, I received a call from either the *Standard* or the *Independent* asking for a comment about The Fat Duck being awarded a third Michelin star."

The 2004 GB&I edition was a fateful year for the Michelin Guide. With information held

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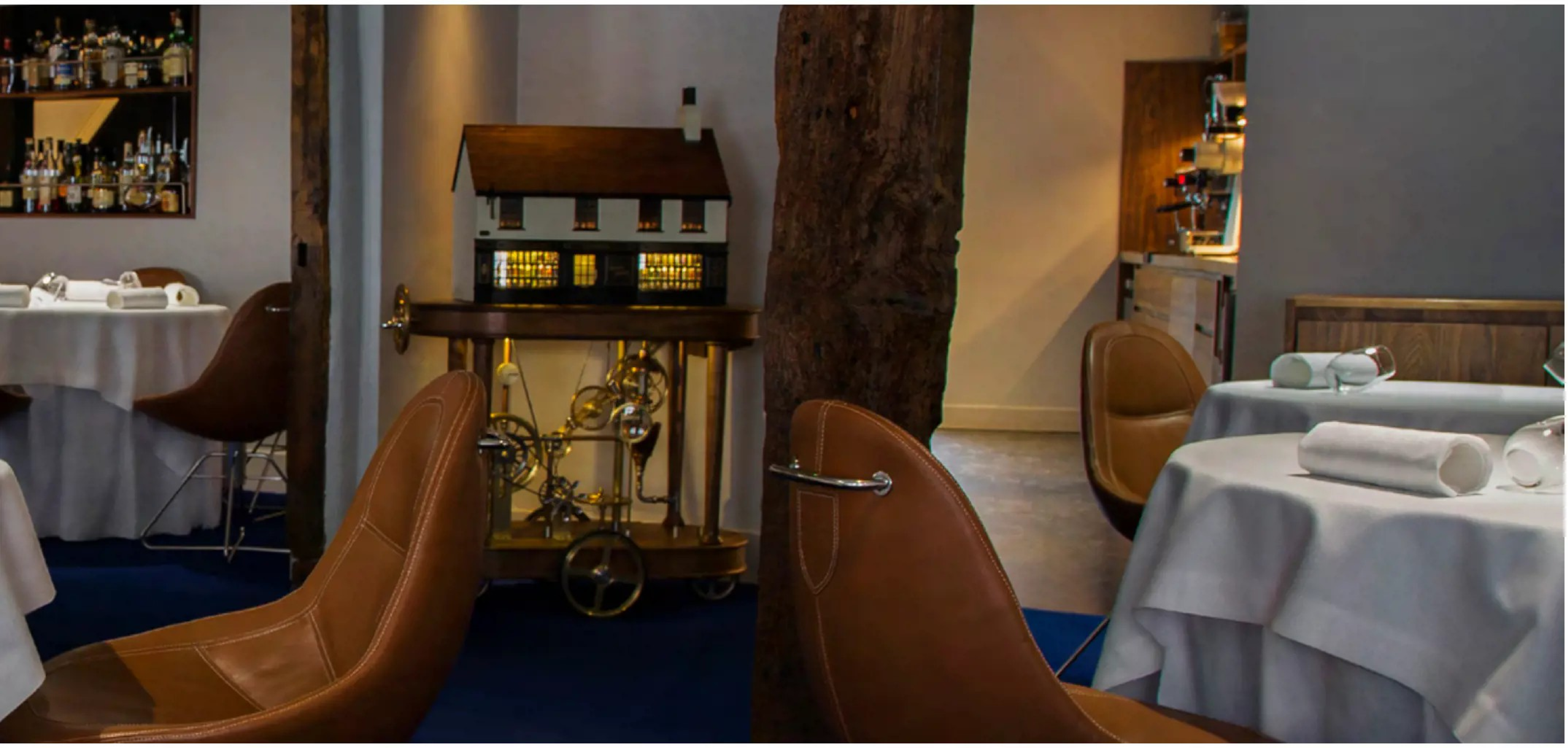


under strict embargo, leaks were rare. Back then, the guide was a printed book, and news of your rating came via fax, a phone call, or a visit. Shops, however, needed to take delivery of the new edition ahead of publication. That year, one bookshop accidentally put the guide on sale early. As a result, the news that The Fat Duck had been awarded its third star was leaked before Michelin's official announcement.

"I later found out the truth was simple – a journalist had walked past the bookshop, spotted the new guide on display, bought a copy, and saw The Fat Duck had three stars.

"We called Michelin, who explained they had planned to visit the restaurant in person, but since I was in Madrid, they hadn't yet told me. Jocky was with me in Spain, while Ash Palmer-Watts was at the restaurant. I rang Ash to confirm it was true – he just slumped in his chair.

"I had a very strange lunch that day. It was a good lunch, but surreal. Afterwards, at the conference, I was given a huge round of applause by the chefs, followed by a big night out with many of the world's most influential three-star chefs. But it all felt like it was happening to someone else – I just couldn't compute it."

Back in the UK, the enormity of it all hit. Insecurities and imposter syndrome crept in.

"I thought, why us? We'll never keep it. Suddenly, we were a three-star restaurant in a tiny old pub in Bray, with no valet parking, a makeshift kitchen, and a row of sheds out the back.

"I even asked for a meeting with Derek Bulmer and Derek Brown, then editors of the Michelin Guide. They came before service, and as we talked in the unlit dining room, the chefs wheeled bins right past them. I felt even more like a fraud.

"They reassured me: the third star was for what we had done, not what we were going to do. Still, disbelief lingered. I was proud, happy and grateful, but also deeply nervous. The recognition felt too extraordinary to be real."

That third star changed everything. The Fat Duck went from a quirky, ambitious village restaurant to an international destination. Reservations surged, critics and food lovers travelled from across the globe, and financially the pressure eased. What once seemed extravagant – the ingredients, the equipment, the research – was now validated by diners seeking a world-class experience.

Most importantly, it gave Heston the confidence to grow beyond Bray. The Fat Duck's success became the foundation for books, television, and new ventures, transforming it from a daring experiment into a celebrated institution with an enduring legacy.

ON THE DEFINITION OF GASTRONOMY

"I only found this out last year: gastronomy is defined as 'the sourcing, preparing, and eating of good food.' It could apply to something as simple as a sandwich.

"I always thought the definition of gastronomy was something far deeper. I always felt uncomfortable being labelled under the term 'molecular gastronomy', because it was often misinterpreted – all tweezers, spherification and tricks. But no, my own gastronomy isn't that.

"Molecular gastronomy is about looking at things under a microscope. It zooms in on the molecules. It's the scientific study and practical application of how cooking techniques and ingredients interact at a molecular level.

"What I create is multi-sensory gastronomy. I only realised this recently. All my dishes have always been driven by the senses.

"I'm a chef, yes – but ultimately, I'm in the business of emotion. Some dishes might take years to develop, and science is definitely part of that process – but at the heart of it all, what I'm trying to do is generate emotion through food."

ON PERSONALISATION OF THE MENU

The personalisation of menus at The Fat Duck, introduced during the restaurant's major relaunch in 2015, was part of Heston's mission to create a deeply immersive and emotionally resonant dining experience – one that went beyond food to tap into memory, nostalgia, and identity.

When guests booked a table after the reopening, they were asked to complete a questionnaire before their visit. The form included prompts about childhood food memories, favourite holidays, scent or sound associations, and comfort dishes.

Using this information, the restaurant would tailor parts of the tasting menu to evoke those personal memories and emotions. A certain dish might be presented with a story, a scent, or a visual cue linked to something the diner had mentioned in their answers.

"This idea, 10 years ago, of trying to personalise dishes for people… what a nightmare that was! I was with Jocky at The World's 50 Best Awards, and something triggered the thought.

"I remember coming back and telling Jonny Lake and Ashley Palmer-Watts that we could personalise menus for every guest. 'Imagine – it's not like going into a hotel and finding a welcome card,' I said. 'This would be something woven into the food itself, their own menu, evoking memories and emotions.'

"And the looks on their faces were not quite what I expected!"

The Fat Duck
baby powder

ON REVISITING À LA CARTE

This year is a big milestone for The Fat Duck, marking thirty years since the restaurant first opened. In February, The Fat Duck announced that as part of their 30th anniversary celebrations, they would bring back their à la carte menu.

"I'd said in the press we're bringing back the original à la carte menu - that's not actually correct. Can you imagine bringing back the exact same recipe from 20 or 30 years ago? So many things have changed – techniques, ingredients, equipment.

"We cooked the dishes as per our original recipes and held a tasting. This is of course an essential part of the process. My restaurants depend on my tastebuds – they're what monitors the quality of what we're doing and drives the restaurants forward. I taste the dishes more now than I've ever done, and we now do this in the restaurant, rather than in the laboratory – after all, that is where the dishes will be eaten. It makes sense to taste them at the table.

"From those tastings, we push and push those recipes further. And I realise that we've moved on so much from 20 years ago. I've tasted some of the original dishes and thought, 'No - that's not right.' It's good. And it's the original recipe. I know, it's good, but there can be more. So, we've literally rebuilt the recipe and then tweaked it again and again and again."

THE MINDFUL EXPERIENCE

Heston Blumenthal is among the first chefs in the world to address a revolution in eating habits motivated by people's changing relationship with food, including the contemporary emphasis on wellbeing and also the rapid rise of weight-loss drugs, by designing The Mindful Experience menu.

The Mindful Experience is a version of The Fat Duck's 'Journey' menu, scaled back in terms of the size of the dishes, but designed to retain the same impact of texture and flavour. Both menus will be available at the restaurant, and diners can book which they prefer.

"This is an aspect of food that has obsessed me for at least a decade. But back then, if you mentioned mindfulness, people looked at you like you were some kind of hippie. So although I wanted to do something along these lines, I didn't know if people were ready for it. So I began small. I invented a concept I called the Mindful Raisin, where you took a single, tiny raisin and examined every aspect of it and its effect on your senses – how it looked, the feel on the fingers as you rolled it around, the aroma as you held it your nose, the texture and flavour as you bit into it. It's incredible the power the experience has: it really takes you into the

moment in a meditative way that promotes a real feeling of wellbeing.

"I was reading everything I could about the microbiome too and, increasingly, I became convinced that eating could nourish not just the body but the mind too, that it could be deeply beneficial to our mental health. In 2019 I did a podcast called 'The Best Raisin You'll Ever Eat' and I devoted a whole chapter in my most recent book, *Is This a Cookbook* [2022], to the benefits of The Mindful Sandwich."

Heston sensed that the food landscape was changing, not least because of the rise of appetite suppressants, meaning millions of people were eating and drinking less and even losing interest in food. He has first-hand experience of this, as he has been taking Mounjaro to combat the weight gained as a side effect of his medication for type 1 bipolar.

"One of the unanticipated effects of taking Mounjaro has been that I've become even more aware of my tastebuds and how hunger works, and I'm eating in a more mindful, focused manner. I felt that, for a variety of reasons, people were becoming more receptive to the idea of a mindful approach to eating, and began looking at ways to introduce my ideas to The Fat Duck. This new version of The Fat Duck menu, then, is carefully tailored to what I see as a growing demand for a different restaurant experience.

"Sometimes, less really is more. Sometimes, depending on your mood and how you're feeling – how your gut is feeling – you might well just desire less of everything. Sometimes, equally, you might just want to focus on taking your time with every mouthful, slowly exploring its effect on all your senses. The Mindful Experience offers a way of satisfying these needs.

"People used to joke that the portions on a tasting menu were so small that you had to grab a burger on the way home. But now, as our needs and expectations and appetites change, maybe this carefully structured

Q
Q

menu is the perfect answer to what many people are looking for."

"I ALWAYS FELT THAT I HAD TO DO SOMETHING NEW"

In recent years, Heston has been diagnosed with both ADHD and bipolar. In the intimate and revealing documentary *Heston: My Life with Bipolar*, he opens up about his late-2023 diagnosis, sharing the disturbing hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, and emotional turmoil that led up to it. He reflects on how the condition has shaped his personal life, creative drive and relationships.

One question I wanted to ask was about how the media have framed him over the years - how he was positioned. Words and phrases such as "eccentric", "mad scientist", or "bonkers genius" were frequently used in headlines and profiles, especially during the 2000s and early 2010s.

Though often meant playfully or admiringly, these labels tended to reduce him to his experiments - his reinvention, his obsessive attention to sensory perception and food psychology. No producer or publisher wanted to see Heston make anything other than the extraordinary; he was expected to be an alchemist, a wizard, a disrupter - never just a chef.

But did those labels add extra pressure? Did the media sensationalise his creativity in ways that, post-diagnosis, take on a more complex meaning?

"I think there were some points in time when, yes, perhaps it did. I always felt like I had to perform, to do something new. It was always expected. It was always 'what's next?' And not just one thing, but multiple things at once.

"Eventually, someone gave me the best answer to that question.

"'I'm going to have a sip of this coffee. That's what's next. That's all you need to know.'"

BRISK BITES
FREE GIFT INSIDE

ON REFLECTION

Thirty years on, as it celebrates its big birthday, The Fat Duck is alive with ambition, excitement, a true spirit of teamwork and it still holds those three Michelin stars. They are still breaking boundaries. Heston is, at heart, still the same chef he was thirty years ago. He still has ambition, projects he wants to fulfill, and a deep love for his flagship restaurant. Despite the accolades, fame and attention, Heston Blumenthal remains a "chef, who just wants to cook". Yet, despite a career spanning three decades and global recognition at the highest of levels, Heston still struggles with accepting the praise so often heaped upon him.

Heston: "I never thought I was good enough to get so much attention from the guidebooks or from my peers"

Claire: "When you reflect, do you see why you got three stars now?"

Heston: "Yes."

Claire: "And why The Fat Duck still has three stars today?"

Heston: "Yes, I mean, the restaurant deserves it."

Claire: "But do you see that you deserved it, too?"

Heston: "For years, it was impossible to take any confidence or compliment. I still have to pause before answering that." C

The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

> “Heston had me at ‘Hello, you.’ As soon as the call came in, there was only ever going to be one answer. It’s a privilege to be back. This place, it’s home. Heston and The Fat Duck have unfinished business.”

SIMON KING

MANAGING DIRECTOR

M.BELLESINI IS LICENSED TO SELL BEERS, WINES AND SPIRITS FOR CONSUMPTION ON THESE PREMISES
LES GRANDES TABLES DU MONDE

IT'S SIMON KING'S SECOND RODEO WITH HESTON BLUMENTHAL AND HIS TEAM AT THE FAT DUCK.

Having joined as Operations Manager in 2009 – after almost six years with Gordon Ramsay, two with Theo Randall, and managing the opening of Skylon for D&D–Simon had already amassed a considerable skill set when he arrived at The Fat Duck the first time around. He left for the States in 2015, returning to the UK two and a half years later, and in August 2024 picked up a phone call from his former boss. "It was only ever going to be a yes," he says.

Rejoining Heston this time as Managing Director – and alongside former colleague Jocky Petrie once again – The Fat Duck has entered its 30th year with an extraordinary sense of ambition, determination, and drive. I spent a day with the team; the energy is palpable. From the KPs to the chefs, FOH to the sommeliers, reservations through to development, it's clear. Some may have thought The Fat Duck couldn't go any further but let me tell you–it feels as though they're only just getting started.

"Fearless. I have always thought that is one of the best words you could ever use to describe Heston and The Fat Duck. Returning to work here is like coming home. It's an exciting time. We've just celebrated our 30th year, there are so many plans and projects afoot, Jocky is back with us, and the energy of the whole team is incredible.

"Fearlessness is what we are always instilling in our teams. Heston's motto is: Question Everything. (It's there on his coat of arms.) When we question everything, there's an element of fearlessness in that decision. We'll literally say, 'What if we just try this?' and then go for it. Nothing may come of it, but unless we try, we won't know. That has always been Heston's approach, and Jocky is brilliant at it too.

"What you discover when you push or remove boundaries can be amazing. One idea often changes your trajectory–but it's that freedom of thinking, of trying, of failure, that adventurous element–that is so inspiring.

"I love sport, and Michael Jordan has incredible statistics on all the shots he missed and the games he lost. Everyone sees him as the greatest, but the reason why he's so great is because he kept going. Roger Federer once gave a speech about the same thing. His win ratio is 52%–so 48% of all his shots he lost–but once the point was gone, he moved on to the next. That's a lesson for us all.

THE JOURNEY
① BREAKFAST TIME
② BESIDE THE SEA
Sound of the Sea
③ INTO THE WOODS
INTERLUDE
Bread and Butter
④ DINNER TIME
Beef Royal
Cheese and Grapes
⑤ OFF TO THE LAND OF NOD
Counting Sheep
⑥ AND THEN TO DREAM
"Like a Kid in a Sweetshop"

"I like to pull those inspirations into empowering the team at The Fat Duck. Whether it's service, a dish, or a project in development—we give it our best shot. Guests arrive having dreamed of this day. For many, it may be the only time they'll ever dine here. They've built up to this moment. Much like a wedding day, they want everything to be perfect—and that's a huge responsibility. It's the flip side of The Fat Duck's legacy: upholding Heston's standards while constantly motivating the team.

"When guests come through the door, there are naturally high expectations. But we must also put them at ease. The modern server must be intuitive—able to sense what every individual guest is looking for. At The Fat Duck, unlike our sister pub, The Hind's Head, we don't have the luxury of hindsight. At the pub, locals come week in, week out; we know names, faces, preferences. Here, we do our best to gather as much information as possible, but the real skill lies in reading the guest, the scenario, the situation—and channelling that excitement into enjoyment."

Simon first met Heston while volunteering at a charity event. "It was down Portsmouth way, in a catering college—Marcus Wareing,

THE JOURNEY

WELCOME

Nitro-poached Aperitif "Lime Grove"

2001 — The first use of liquid nitrogen in a restaurant

Aerated Nitro Beetroot, Horseradis

2011 — The appliance of science I: creating the perfect palate stimulato

① BREAKFAST

Breakfast in a Bow

2005-2015 — Allusions and illusions: introduc

② BES

Cra

Angela Hartnett, John Campbell were there, and so was Heston. I managed the students and ran the service for the evening. It was a fantastic event, and Heston was impressed. He suggested we meet for a coffee, and that's when he asked me to come and take a look at The Fat Duck. The rest is history.

"Three Michelin stars, Best Restaurant in the World, 10/10 in the *Good Food Guide*—The Fat Duck had won everything. Looking at those achievements, I wondered how we could possibly make it any better.

"But if you look hard enough you can always find ways to improve things. Service was super consistent, but it seemed like it could perhaps be freer and more expressive. Ironically, it was my time at The Ritz—the guéridon work, the tableside theatre—that provided some of the tools to bring even more drama and theatre to The Fat Duck's service.

"One of the proudest statements of my career is that I walked into The Fat Duck at that level, at that time, somewhere with all those achievements—and still managed to find help find ways to take it to a new level. Isa Bal had established an incredible wine programme—the wine was off the charts. The kitchen was firing on all cylinders. But there was an opportunity to work with front of house. We brought in incredible professionals and built a very stable team. Fanny, our restaurant manager, is still here 20 years on—she's an absolute legend."

Although joining as Operations Manager, Simon's primary focus at first was the flagship restaurant. He would later oversee The Hind's Head, The Crown, and the opening of The Perfectionists' Café in Heathrow's Terminal 2. When The Fat Duck relocated to Australia in 2015 for a six-month residency—allowing the Bray restaurant to undergo extensive refurbishment—Simon took the opportunity to work with one of his icons: Danny Meyer. He headed to Manhattan.

"I had read Danny's books; his whole approach was something that inspired me. Culture was everything. We would eat strategy for breakfast. The power of culture, the power of human interaction, but also the proof that you can achieve greatness in a great way without combat. True greatness is about inspiring people, using the right language, connecting dots, supporting and developing teams without fear, ridicule, or intimidation."

After several years, Simon returned to the UK, rejoining the Gordon Ramsay Group as Director of Operations before holding the same roles at JKS Restaurants and The Wolseley Hospitality Group. He oversaw openings, led business development, and later founded Igniting Hospitality to support start-ups and established businesses alike. But despite his success, there was always a niggling feeling in the back of his mind.

"I've recently said to the team, you never appreciate what you have until it's gone. And that was a big factor in my return. I thought about Heston and The Fat Duck a lot. My respect and homage for Heston have always been strong.

"This is home for me. This is where I'm most comfortable. The only thing that could surpass the feeling of working with Danny Meyer in New York was coming back to Heston. And there's an element of unfinished business.

"Heston, of course, is Heston – this unstoppable creative force. And he already had a fantastic team full of loyal, enthusiastic, imaginative people. Add to that Jocky, who is an unbelievably talented chef, and myself, and you've got group with a huge potential. In the past though, some of that potential wasn't

perhaps fully realized. We needed to find a way to harness and focus it more efficiently, more effectively.

"The team had a lovely moment with Heston at our birthday party, just acknowledging what we can do. The 30th celebrations have been going on for quite some time. Seeing the team embrace it, having Heston and his incredible palate doing more tastings than ever before, it's amazing.

"There's so much treasure in our archives that has yet to be mined. Some of it is extraordinary. Heston's constantly coming up with ideas for projects and dishes but, for one reason or another, we haven't got them over the line. What's exciting is that, with the team we've got in place now, we can actually revisit those projects. Fulfilment isn't just about opening restaurants—it's also about finishing dishes and realising dreams. It's not about commercial drive. It's about creativity, openness, multisensory experiences—all the motivations that Heston had when he first opened The Fat Duck still ring true today, and in many ways are even more relevant.

"I believe fine dining is escapism. Escapism from the normal world. How else could you justify spending hundreds of pounds on food? Well, you're not just paying for food—you're paying for a unique experience. Now more than ever, we need to escape from the grey,

CLUCK CLUCK
GINGER WINGS

pessimistic, aggressive world we're living in. So why not come to Bray—or any other amazing restaurant—and, for a few hours, just enjoy your company, the experience, the smells, the flavours, the sounds. Leave your phones behind, turn them off. Escape into the wonderment of Hestonland.

"Heston had me at 'Hello you', As soon as the call came in, there was only ever going to be one answer. It feels nostalgic, like a homecoming—and like unfinished business. Heston has a burning desire and drive that truly inspire and motivate. Being part of that, and in my role, being an integral part of it, has the potential to be one of the most fulfilling times of my career.

"I feel very fortunate, very driven, and very passionate. There's only one option. I only see one outcome—and that is us achieving and finishing what we started.

"Jocky and I have come back to be part of an amazing team. With us all supporting Heston, there's nothing he can't do."

WHAT I LOOK FOR IN FRONT OF HOUSE

"Charisma and character are a big part of what I look for, but there's also intuition, life skills, people skills, discipline, knowledge and the ability to handle pressure. At The Fat Duck, you're on stage. You are part of a performance; there's one chance to get it right. The FOH don't have the margin of error that back of house has – if something's not right in the kitchen, a chef can begin again. FOH do not have that luxury.

CHURCH LANE
CUL-DE-SAC
HIGH STREET

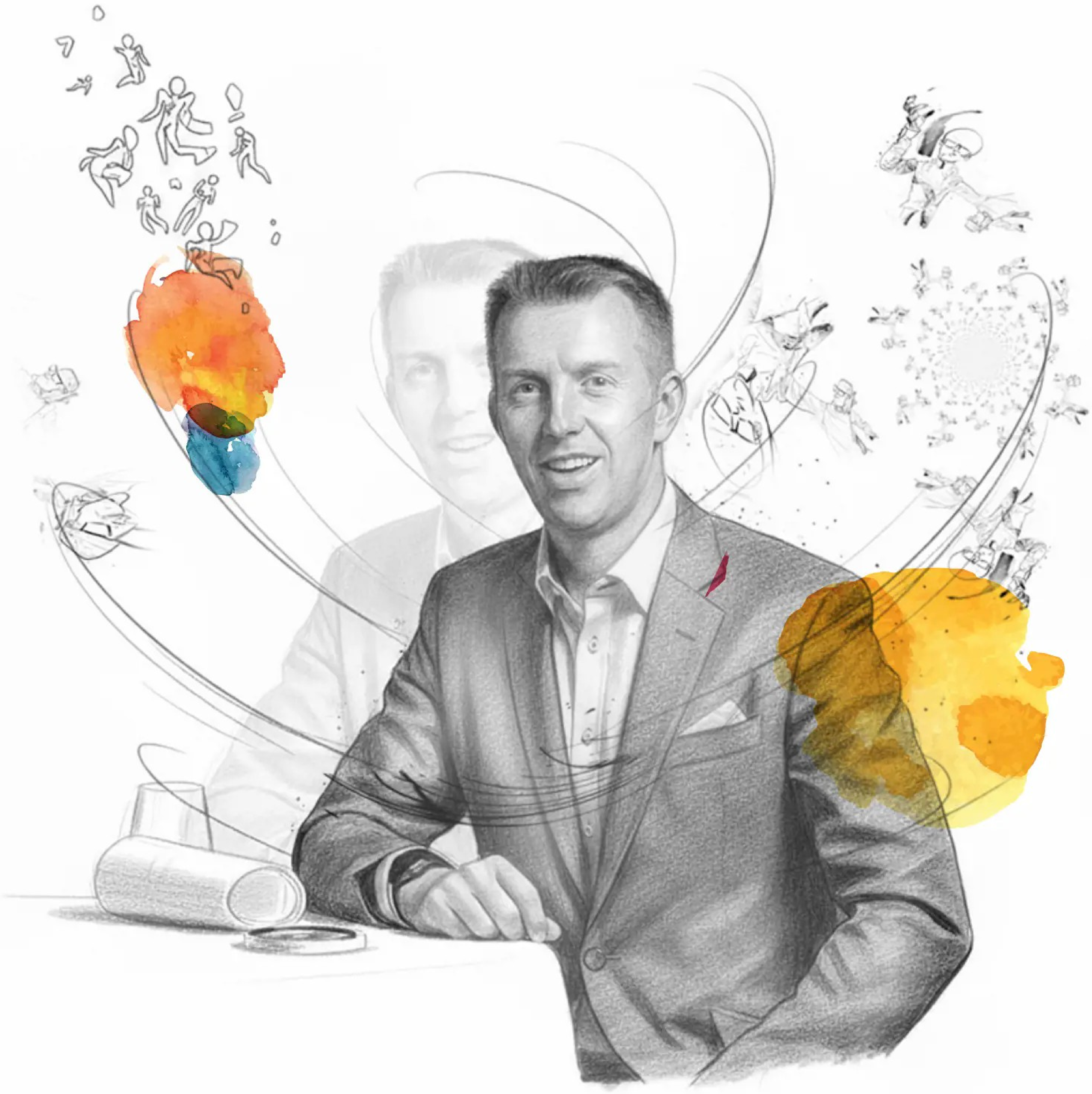
"Having experience plays a part, as does a team mentality. Some FOH may not necessarily be blessed with much experience because they're young. But if I see something in a young inexperienced person with the right character, we'll place them in an environment that protects and empowers them, we build them into amazing professionals.

"There are also some people with no experience in hospitality but lots of life experience behind them. They have a lot to offer as well. They may be having a career change or, as we see so often, may have taken a degree at university to appease parents, yet always fancied hospitality.

"What I look for is a blend. We look at our people as individuals. Hospitality is a team sport, and the best teams have a collection of strong characters, strong on systems and knowledge, maybe some with more flair than others - if you can get that blend right, you provide the most consistent, attentive and intuitive service."

"One of the best questions I ask myself and I've relayed to my management teams is, if they're representing you, how do they make you feel? Are they going to do you justice? It's an amazing shift when they look at it from that perspective. When someone employs another who has worked for you in the past – will that person do you and the profession credit?

"Whether it's recruiting someone, promoting someone, developing someone, when you start taking on that mantra, when someone says, 'I've worked for Simon King', what does that mean? It isn't just about developing people to be in your team; it is also developing people to take what you have taught them to future employment."

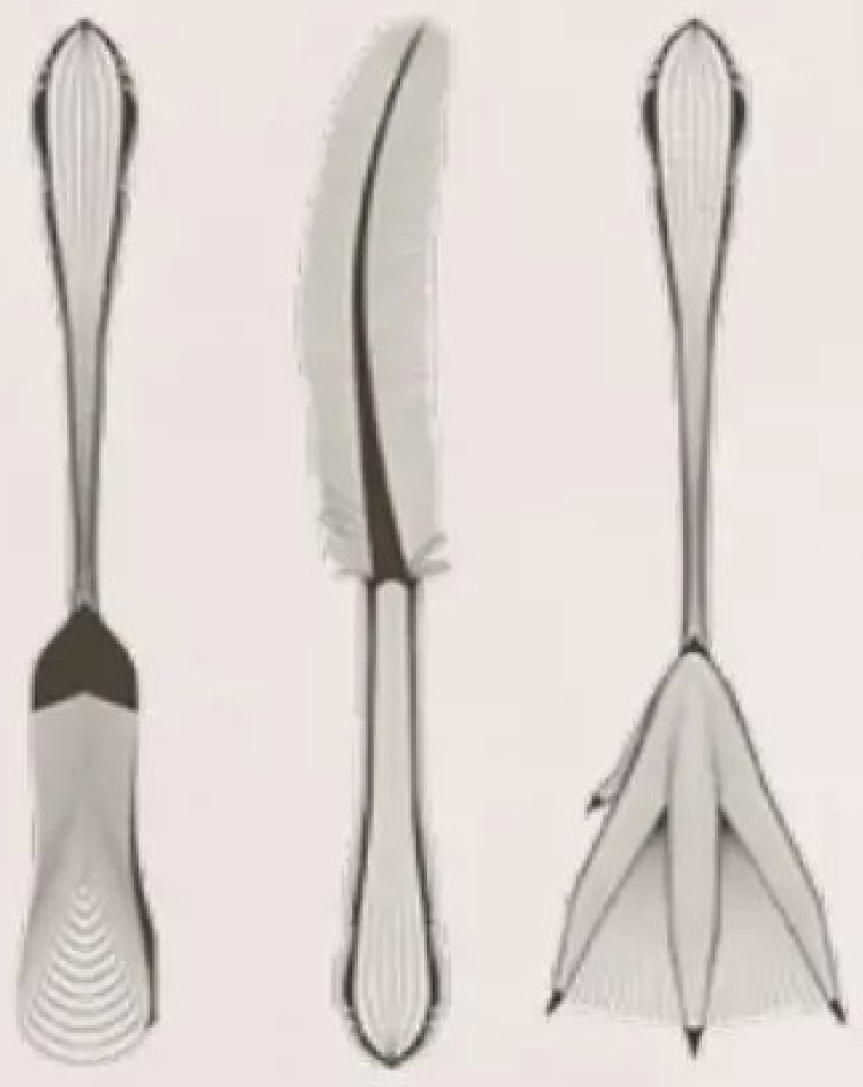


A LESSON FROM HESTON

"A lesson that Heston taught me and still lives with me today is this: look inwards as well outwards. There's always more than one perspective and, if things are not going as you hoped or expected, maybe you need to look first at yourself and ask yourself, 'Why am I not getting through? What do I need to do differently in order to get us all in sync and where we want to be?'

"When it comes to young people coming into the sector, if they're not responding or reacting as you expected, it's too easy to dismiss it by saying, 'Oh it's Generation Z, they don't care any more.' In fact, they're not the problem. The responsibility is with the person trying to teach, encourage, inspire. If you're not succeeding in galvanizing your team, you need to change your approach. Don't just explain it away, saying, 'It's them.' It's not them, it's us, it's our industry. We have an amazing industry that attracts people who are passionate about it. It doesn't require qualifications and it's super accessible but where's the structure? Where's the professionalism in our industry? It is still too hard to find. I want this industry to be treated seriously. I still think my own parents are waiting for me to get a proper job, right?

"But until we have a proper industry and a proper profession, we're never going to be taken seriously."



The Fat Duck

heston blumenthal

> There is untold gold in The Fat Duck archives which we are going to get our teeth into.

JAMES ‘JOCKY’ PETRIE

GLOBAL CULINARY DIRECTOR

M.BELLESINI IS LICENSED TO SELL BEERS, WINES AND SPIRITS FOR CONSUMPTION ON THESE PREMISES
Traditions et Qualité
LES GRANDES TABLES DU MONDE

ANOTHER VERY FAMILIAR FACE HAS JOINED HESTON ONCE AGAIN, AS GLOBAL CULINARY DIRECTOR - JAMES 'JOCKY' PETRIE.

Born in the Scottish Highlands, Jocky's first job in hospitality was washing pots at a local country house hotel, following his brother into the industry out of sibling rivalry. Catering college in Perth was a three-hour drive from home, but it gave him his first formal training before he rushed back into kitchens.

It was during this time that Jocky experienced his first Michelin-starred meal, at Paul Rankin's Roscoff in Belfast. "I can still remember the venison with Puy lentils and balsamic. I was like - what is that?! The only lentils I knew went in soup. It blew my mind." He went on to the Michelin-starred Kinnaird Hotel under John Webber, where a sudden tomato allergy nearly ended his career. It prompted a move into pastry. "Except for the basics at college, I had no clue about pastry. It was brutal. Books, trial and error, a lot of mistakes."

Next - Hambleton Hall, where he was thrown into producing intricate desserts, sugar domes and breads, making market runs to London in a van overnight. The Inn at Little Washington in Virginia followed, where the eccentric luxury of yoga sessions before service, Dalmatian-print chef trousers and Tibetan chants was matched by exacting standards. "One night I was sweeping leaves in for Warren Beatty to walk on, the next I was surrounded by chefs Keller, Trotter and Boulud, wondering how I'd ended up here."

After 18 months in the US, Jocky returned to the UK in 2001 - straight into the magic of Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck.

"I kept hearing about this place in the UK serving bacon and egg ice cream and parsnip cereal, and I was like, 'What is this crazy stuff I'm hearing? What is going on here?' So, when I was asked if I'd like to go for the sous chef position, I jumped at it. When I arrived, I found out there were two of us in the running - and only one would get the job. It was dog-eat-dog, survival of the fittest. I got it. From there, I set my sights on pastry.

"Those early days at the Duck were wild. We had such a rebellious, anarchic streak. It still gives me goosebumps when I think back on how utterly bonkers and brilliant those 11 years were. I remember when the second Michelin star was announced. Michelin used to fax the results back then—before the whole big ceremony thing—and we were so busy in service we barely acknowledged it!

SLOW
Ducks
Crossing
THE FAT DUCK & HINDS HEAD
CAR PARK
10

The Fat Duck

"I was in Madrid with Heston when we heard about the third star. We'd spent the day at Madrid Fusion demonstrating how to inject chips with ketchup to an audience that included Ducasse, Robuchon, and Bocuse. At one point, we had the crowd blowing up balloons as part of the demo. I remember looking at Heston as Ducasse was puffing into a balloon and saying, 'What are we doing? This is mad!'

"Nick Lander from the Financial Times was there. After the demo, Nick bundled us into a taxi for tapas. Heston took a call and went silent. We'd been awarded the third star. The following three days? We didn't sleep much!"

During those 11 years, The Fat Duck transformed dramatically - from a tiny, chaotic kitchen that relied on three sheds out back and a fold-down table in the cellar for prep, into one of the most celebrated restaurants in the world. Expansion followed quickly: Heston bought the neighbouring pub, The Hind's Head, the very day after borrowing chairs from them for service. Development kitchens were built; and then came television and books. Jocky found himself alongside Heston at the centre of it all as Head of the Fat Duck Experimental Kitchen - developing dishes and recipes, always experimenting, always perfecting.

In 2013, Jocky left for London. Firstly, working for Brett Graham at The Ledbury. Eighteen months later, he joined the Gordon Ramsay Group as Executive Head of Development, a post he remained in until 2023. "No day, no week, was ever the same. Whichever kitchen, whichever country, I was there to support openings, do development, work on concepts – so many things. It was a dynamic and exhilarating company to be a part of."

RETURNING TO THE FAT DUCK

"I hadn't really crossed paths with Heston much since I left – we were both caught up in different worlds. But eventually, we reconnected, and I found myself back at The Fat Duck after many years away. Walking in again, it was a strange moment – both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time."

Upon returning Jocky took a look at every aspect of the business, and he could see that there were plenty of projects and ideas – some first imagined by Heston long ago – that had yet to be realised.

"My visit wasn't about getting involved again – it was simply to see how things were. There was a talented team, people I respected and some I'd worked with before, and they were creating thoughtful food. But it felt like there was yet more potential out there. In any

environment, no matter how brilliant, you need a spark, a sense of direction to keep pushing forward."

As he reflects, Jocky speaks about the importance of having the right people around you — those who not only support but also challenge, inspire, and push boundaries. "Even at the very top, you need someone alongside you who keeps you striving for more.

"Coming in, you have the advantage of seeing things with fresh eyes. The wine cellar installation was incredible, for example, but it was underused. All that lighting system, the sound system - so much potential. There were even scripts for a wine experiment, but it was still on the drawing board. I could see how that should be added to as part of the overall business model. So I pushed for its implementation.

"The kitchen is another example. The Fat Duck had a kitchen that served its purpose. Certainly better than the tiny one it had when I first worked at the Duck. But it seemed clear that the kitchen could and should become part of the experience. No discredit to the guys, but if you get kitchen tours coming in and it is just people saying hello – that's a waste of an opportunity. How amazing would it be for diners to try something, see something fascinating rather than just introducing them to the team? Especially since The Fat Duck is all about exploration and discovery. And then there are dishes we can rework and bring back: for example, Heston developed a mashed potato and lime jelly that used to be fed to diners on a spoon. We could give every diner a spoonful or tasting in the kitchen. Give people off-menu experiences they're not expecting.

"We're also going to introduce the 'top-seat' in 2026 - a seat at the end of the pass. We get a lot of bookings for one, and that's great - but

means less tables are available for bigger groups, and it's not like we're a big restaurant in the first place. So, let's accommodate them and make it into something even more special.

"The chefs are going to plate up and introduce the dishes to the guests, it is going to be interactive. They'll come out of their shells and really become part of the story. We've road tested it ourselves, to see how it all feels. We're also exploring the chefs going into the dining room, saucing the plates, introducing the dishes. There will be a lot of training, we'll make sure everyone knows what they're doing beforehand, so nobody is on edge. They're all aware that they will now have to go into the restaurant. So that's another barrier broken. The service is just as important as the back of house, if not more important. The chefs will have to match the energy and professionalism to complement the service team.

“With Heston at the helm and the right team in place to take things forward, we're also taking a look at projects started years ago that have, for whatever reason, stayed on the drawing board. As a team, we all discuss new ideas. If you've got knowledge about something, pass that knowledge on. If you've seen something interesting, let's talk about it. Chatting though ideas or inspiration is never wasted effort. “That's what we do, that's how we go, always above and beyond.”

ON TASTING THE MENUS

“We never did tastings in the restaurant, ever. Back in the day, tastings were always held in the laboratory. But we realised you need to taste the dishes in the restaurant setting. Which is a completely different environment. Different lighting, different sounds, different everything. We sit down with Heston in the restaurant, and we taste the dishes and the

drinks in situ. We have the teams involved in the tasting process. The sommelier team, the front of house and the chefs. It's not coming all from the laboratory, ideas and suggestions often crop up from these tastings when you see, taste and smell the dish at the table. We test the dishes in the environment for which they have been created to be enjoyed in. Sitting in The Fat Duck Restaurant."

ON THE EXTENSIVE ARCHIVES

"How many dishes or concepts have we got down in the archives? Bloody Hell, thousands if you count across the whole Fat Duck Group. Projects which were just written on paper, some which were part developed, some which were developed yet never made it through to diners, random notes about emotions, flavours, pairings, techniques - there is untold gold in our archives which we are going to get our teeth into.

"There's one I really want to bring back, I haven't spoken to Heston about it yet, but

I'm going to try my best. It is a dish that was inspired by my 'shoe phase'. I was obsessed with good shoes and Jeffery West, the iconic shoemaker, invited me up to his studio in Northampton.

"They took me through all the processes of tanning and leather making. The whole process of salting, curing, drying, dipping it. It was like a process of cooking. But they use cow hide. And were making shoes, not food.

"You get a raw product in and then you get an end result through the whole process of cooking, curing, maturing or fermenting. I wanted to do it with Turbot. We looked at it and we did create a dish towards the end - but never fully completed it. That's one dish I want to bring back and continue developing.

"And while we have so many ideas and concepts in the archives, we're also continually looking at the dishes we've got on the menu. Our crockery, plateware, cutlery and all the extra bits and pieces that make up the dining experience - always innovating, always pushing for more."

HIS FIRST 12 MONTHS BACK AT THE FAT DUCK

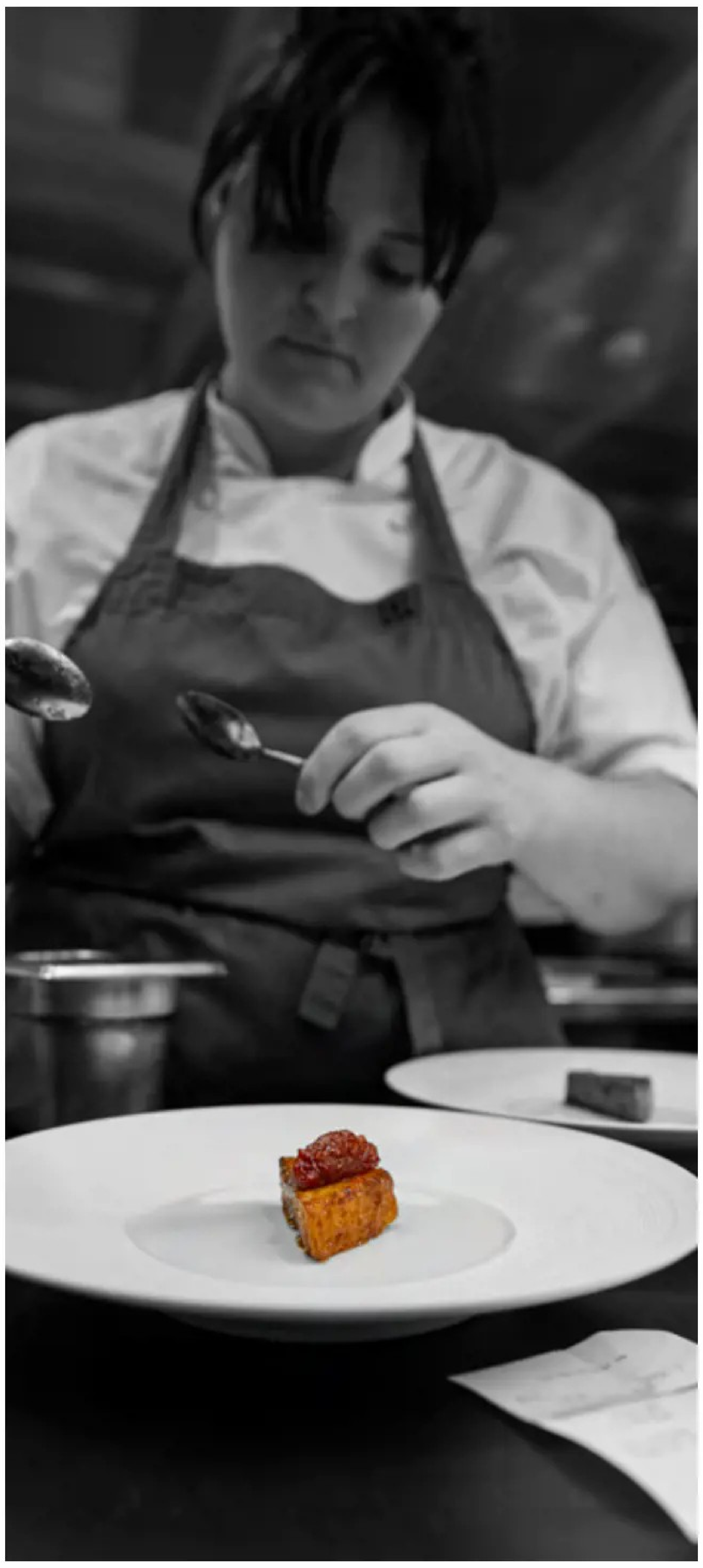
"This year has been about stability. Getting the team as strong as possible, getting work done as much as possible. I guess the first point is making sure that place is the best it can be. For the business to be stable, that it's doing what it should be doing.

"Next year is about growth, build the brands, come up with new brands. Build on our development team, build on all our amazing teams, front of house, back of house, everything. We've got lots of elements going on in there now that can run for the next few years. We have all these creative processes and Heston's firing on all cylinders.

"Working with Simon King again is amazing. We share the same 'let's get going' approach. Our knowledge, our processes, visions and values - all shared. Along with our commitment to Heston and the legacy he created and continues to create. Let's build this business.

"The Hind's Head, for example. Heston's vision there is responsible for such a shift in pub dining across the UK. Runny Scotch Eggs? Triple Cooked Chips? It has been the birthplace of some amazing British gastronomy that has been replicated thousands of times over. I don't know why we didn't open more Hind's Heads. Could we do more with it in the future? Maybe - nothing is off the table - everything is there to be discussed.

"We have an online shop, which we started last year, offering a number of products, but we've hopefully got some BIG things happening for the shop in Christmas 2025. All our own label. We did the final sign off of the tastings a couple of weeks ago and we are just doing the



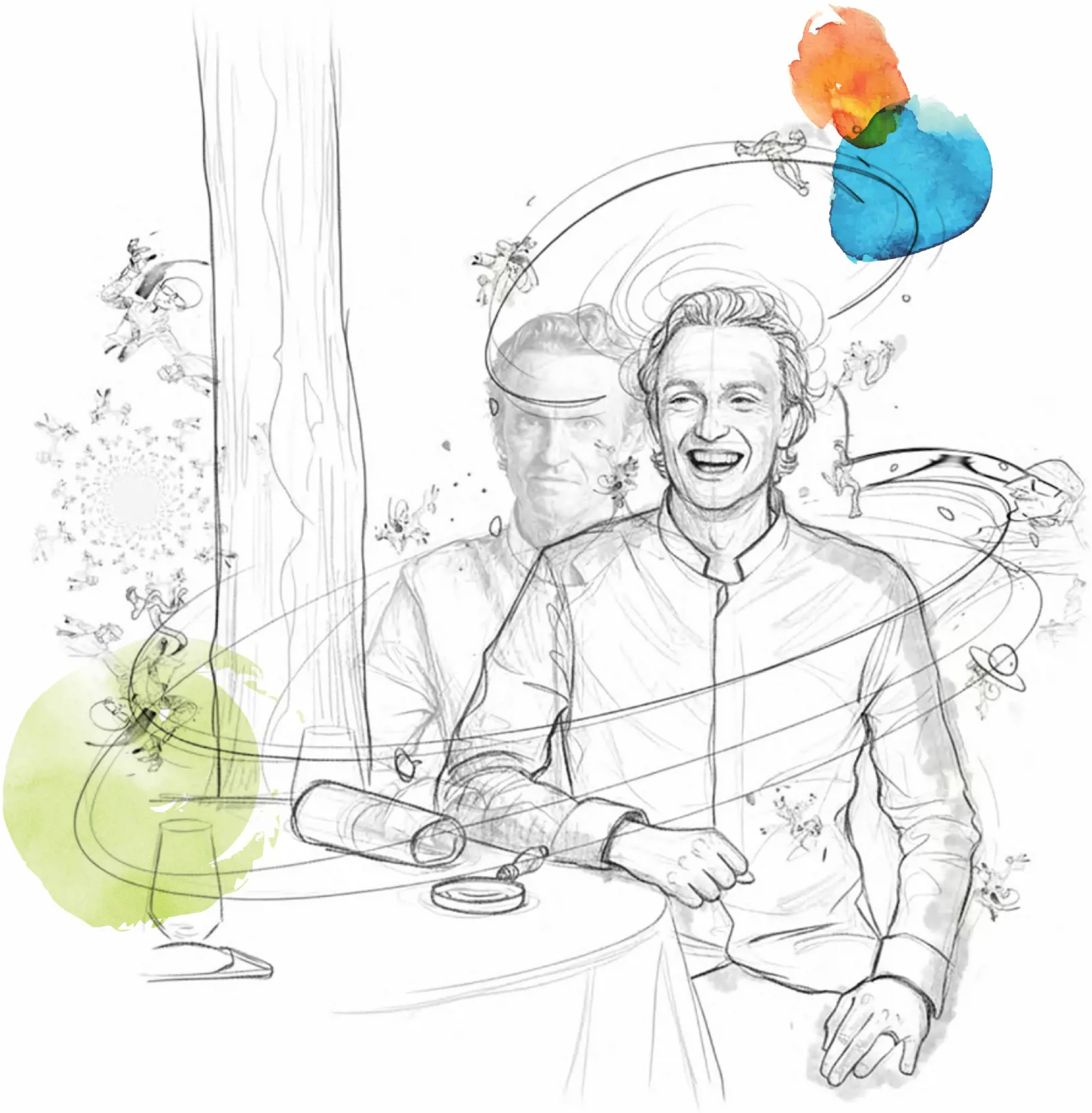
packaging now. There could be the massive return of a very festive, iconic Heston product...

ON THE MINDFUL EXPERIENCE

"Inspired by the 'mindful sandwich' that Heston wrote about in his most recent cookbook, we developed our own version – a a cheese sandwich, but it's not so much about the flavour as it is about concentrating on the moment, surrendering to your senses and deriving satisfaction, even wellbeing, from it. Last year, for Christmas, I did a prawn cocktail version. In a tiny little sandwich box packaging, there's a little triangle sandwich.

"Mindfulness is apt, nowadays. Thinking about your microbiome, eating less, and the

Mad Hatter's Tea



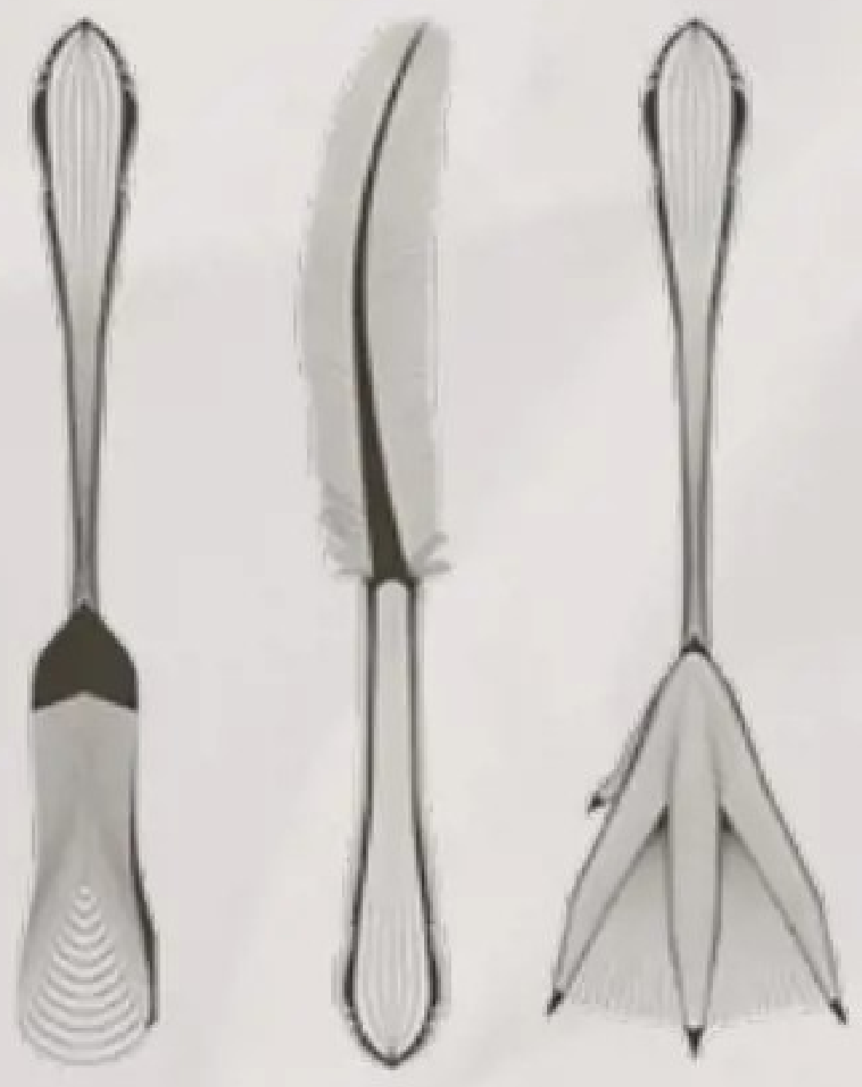
body benefits. Heston talked with foresight about all these things in *Is This a Cookbook?* Reading bits of that book prompted me to talk with Heston to see if we could find ways at the restaurant to build on his ideas about the mindful experience.

"That's going to be our next big thing. There are many reasons for it, for example, people on medication who are experiencing a reduced appetite, but still want to be able to go out and enjoy flavour. People choosing to be more careful with the quantity they are eating. People who, for whatever reason or motivation, are thinking about what they are eating and why. If you eat mindfully, Heston firmly believes, you can have a beneficial effect on your mood and mental health and wellbeing.

"So, taking our cue from Heston's idea, we looked at the menu and played around with portions and presentation and showed him the results and he was like 'This is amazing, let's go.' We will be the first to deliver this style of concept.

"But that's what I'm here for. Let's get on with things. I know the possibilities of this business. I know the possibilities with the restaurant, and I know how to get the best out of people. Let's not sit on it and think about it. Which I feel we tended to do a bit in the past. It took a lot of time to get stuff on the menu, which served its purpose. We've got the knowledge now. We've done all the groundwork. If some things don't work, so what? Unless you get going, you don't know. And if you get going and you discover it's rubbish, well at least you did it. From there you can get going again or adapt. We're going to action things and get going on them, because that's what creativity is all about." C

Words Emily Bridgwater

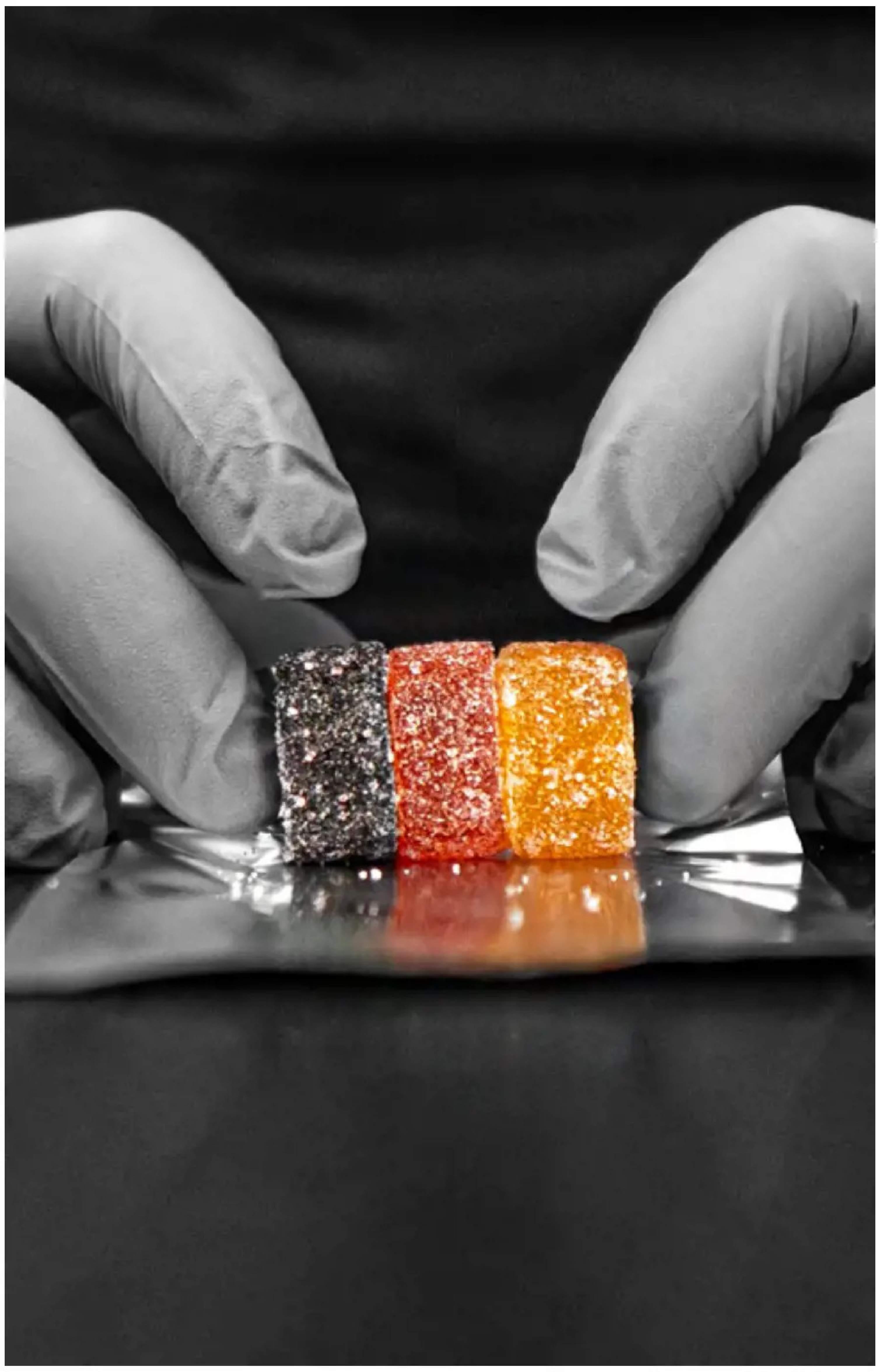


The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

> “Our focus is making sure we give an amazing personal experience to our guests and keep evolving and moving forward.”

ASHLEY HATTON

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT



AS FAR AS JOBS AS DEVELOPMENT CHEF JOBS GO, THERE CAN BE NONE MORE EXCITING THAN THE ONE HELD BY ASHLEY HATTON.

As Head of Development at The Fat Duck working alongside its idiosyncratic founder, Heston Blumenthal, there's no other job quite like it in the industry. After all, it has, for the last 30 years, been one of the most exciting and dynamic dining experiences, has held three Michelin stars since 2004, and was named the World's Best Restaurant 2005.

It's a creatively challenging job; Ashley's held it for more than 12 years and still talks about it with as much enthusiasm as someone far greener.

"There's always something different to do, which is always attractive to me. I've done allot of service and operations, and it's great to have different challenges? I've learned so many different skills and done so many different things over the years, it's just always been interesting," he said.

From helping to create iconic menus for the group's restaurants, which includes the one-Michelin-starred Hinds Head at Bray and the two-Michelin-starred Dinner at the Mandarin Oriental, to designing packaging for a new online store, or sourcing ceramics, it's a role which is never dull.

He works closely with group Managing Director Simon King and Global Culinary Director James 'Jocky' Petrie, who returned to the business in 2024 after 12 years with The Gordon Ramsay Group.

"My job is to help keep driving and moving things forward, seeing where we can be innovative, where we can be business-minded and explore new revenue streams.

"As well as all the usual challenges in hospitality, we are constantly needing to consider how we reach new customers, new audiences, and assess the changes in the industry.

"When I first started, I went straight to the development kitchen as senior development chef. I've always been in that part of the business. At the time as a new dad, I thought I would try to find a job that I could have a bit better work

The Fat Duck
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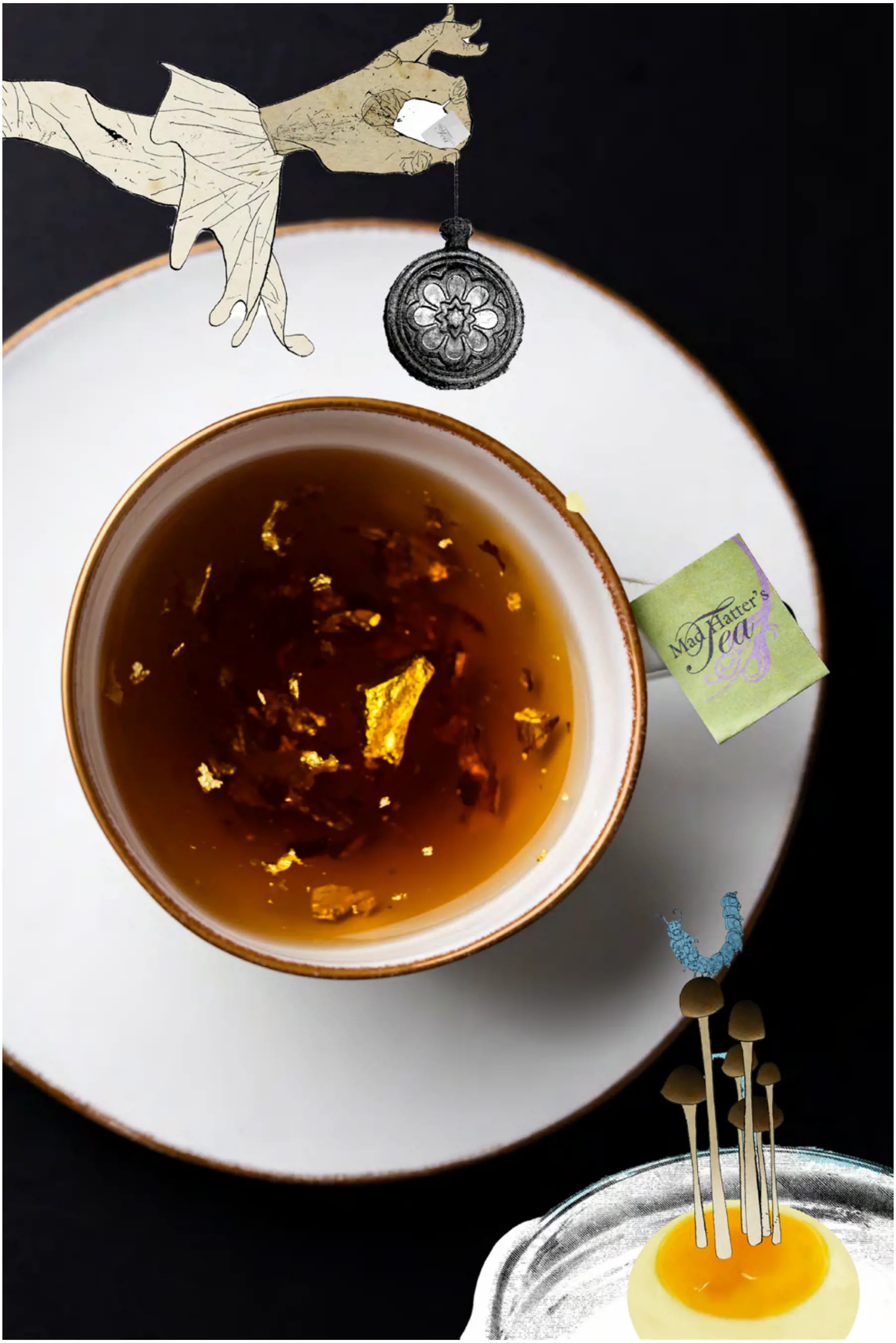

Mad Hatter's Tea

life balance. I'd been cooking in kitchens, day and night, for the last 15 years and I'd just had my first child, so it was time for a change.

"I wasn't that familiar with what a development job was like as there were not that many positions in restaurants back then. Development jobs tended to be going into factory-type industry but the fact that this was within the fine-dining sector – and at this high level- really appealed to me."

Back in 2013 when he joined The Fat Duck, it was at a point when the restaurant and Heston himself were still heavily involved in TV.

"In that era, we were still filming Fantastical Feasts and Great British Food, we were doing cookbooks, working with Waitrose and other partnerships. We don't do much of that right now but we're going to get back into it in the future."

Just a year later, the restaurant shut for nine months while it moved out to Australia. It's a period Ashley said was one of the highlights of his career because it was a time of working alongside Heston and former head chef Jonny Lake as they decided how The Fat Duck would evolve when it reopened.

"That was our biggest project the team had ever done – we were figuring out what the next chapter of the restaurant would become. It was during that time that Heston imparted his philosophy of 'question everything'.

"It was an opportunity to make sure that we all, as much as possible, thought like him and tried to adopt his way of thinking as much as we could whilst doing our jobs. Working that closely with him every day was amazing. It molded my way of thinking forever, and it was a great project to be a part of."

Right now, Ashley's team is small and includes former National Chef of the Year winner Tom Swaby in a full-time position plus a part-time development chef who works elsewhere in the business the rest of the time.

"I've been from a team of eight down to a team of two. The dynamics change, the business changes, and we've also changed our development set up in using the resources in the restaurants as well a bit more.

"Whereas now we work a bit closer together, which is good - because it makes things a little bit more streamlined."

When Ashley joined the business, he'd served as executive chef on Richard Branson's Necker Island, although after welcoming his first child he and his partner decided to return to the UK to be close to family.

He grew up near Reading and took his first kitchen job at a French bistro in Woodley before moving to Dartmouth for a job at The Carved Angel. The position of head chef at Plantation House Hotel near Totnes followed. He was just 19.

However, it was during a drive back to Berkshire with his dad that his career took an unexpected turn.

"We drove back up the M40 and dad told me to get off and go a different way home and I

saw the brown sign for Le Manoir, and I said 'How far are we from home?' and my dad said, 'About 40 minutes.'

"We put the timer on, and it was exactly 40 minutes. A week later when I was on holiday, I went back and knocked on the back door of Le Manoir and asked for a job and got invited back for a trial.

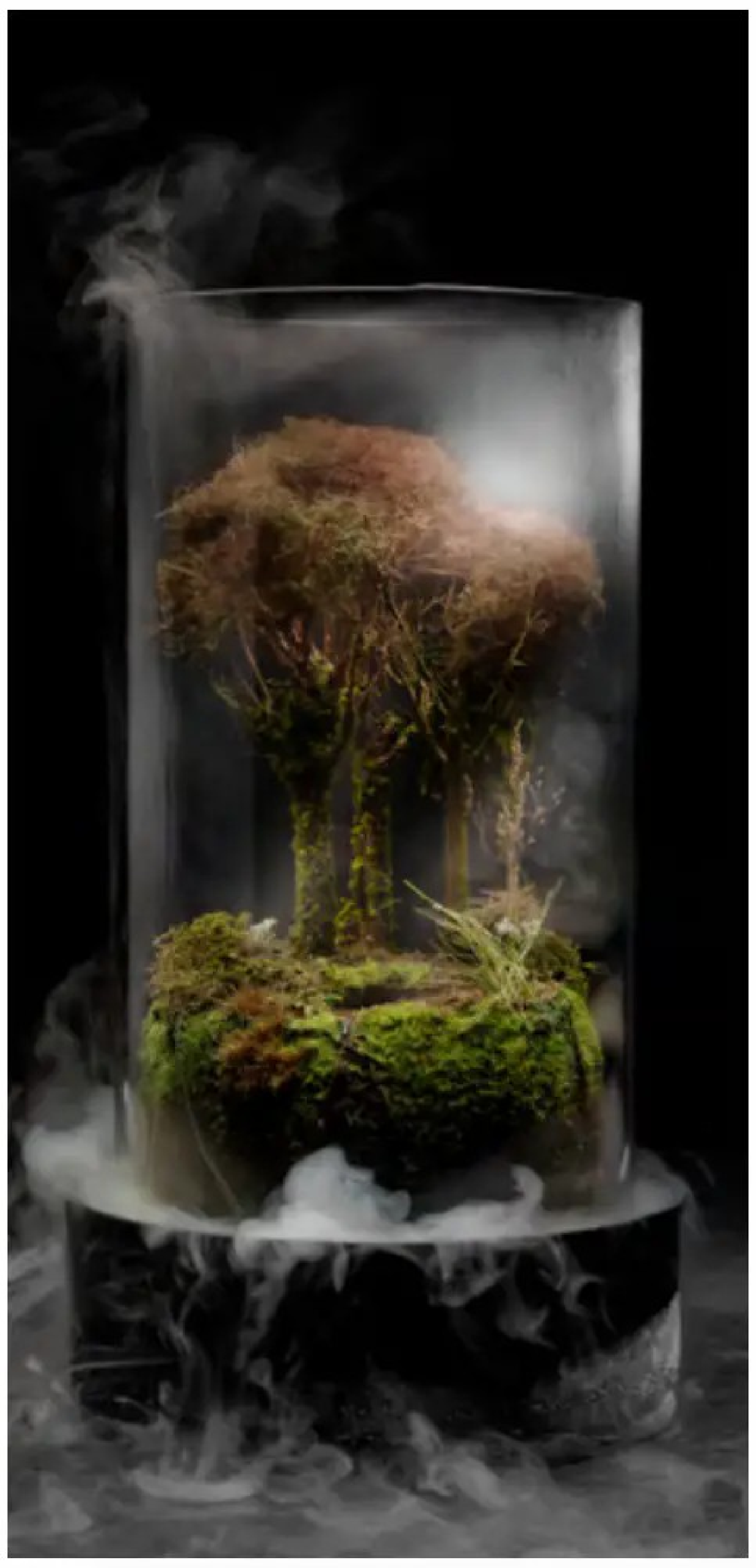
"I got a job there and that was when I really started to understand what being a chef was all about; yes, I'd run a restaurant before, but I was young I didn't really know what the hell I was doing. I was cooking, I'd got three AA Rosettes, but as far as running a business went, I didn't know anything.

"Working at Le Manoir was a completely different league, and it set me up for life; the skills, the techniques, and the management side of it."

After five years there, rising to the position of senior sous chef, the then-head chef Gary Jones helped him secure the job on Necker where he spent four years. His return to the UK came with fatherhood, and it's when he took up the role at The Fat Duck.

He's not looked back since, "Creativity, for me, isn't constant, it isn't about an individual, it's about a team a culture, challenges and problems that need solving, it comes in ebbs and flows, like everything. But it's also not just thinking 'Well I've done it, I've smashed it, that's perfect. It's always looking things again and, the next time you taste it or experience it, looking at it from a different angle.

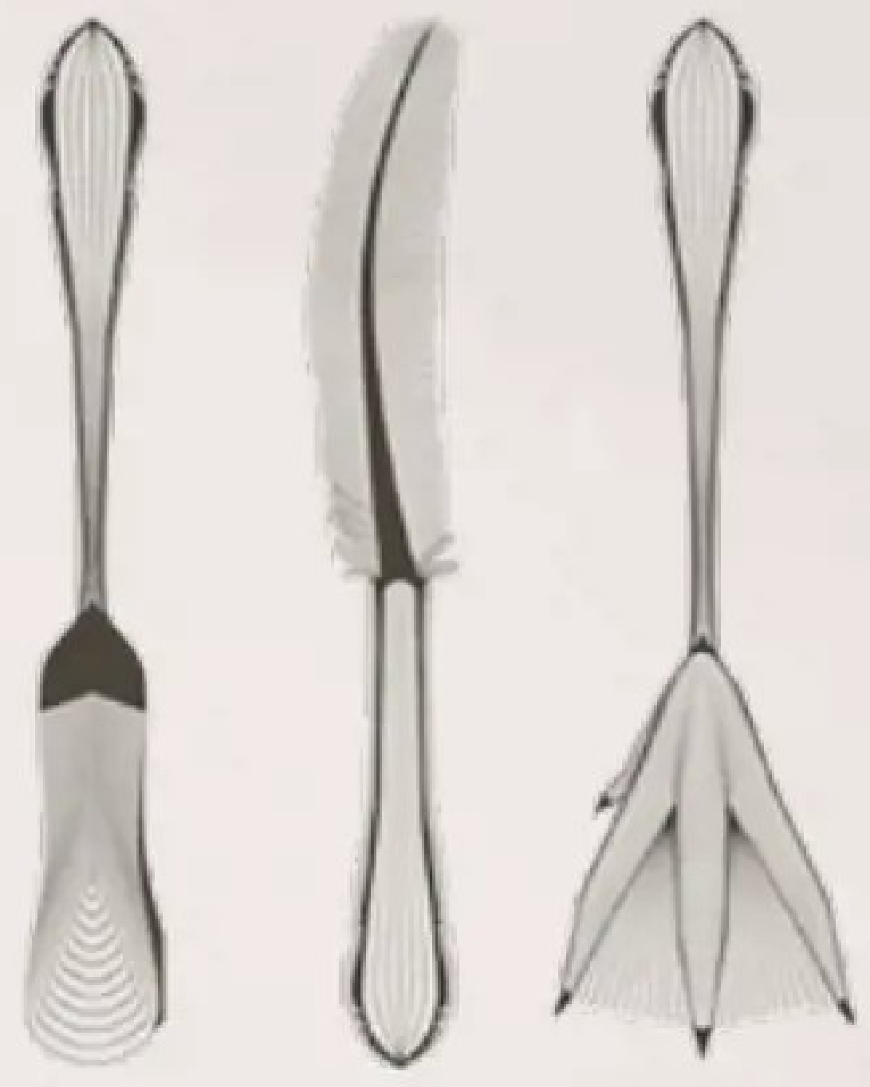
The Fat Duck



Customer journey and their experience is foremost, our focus is making sure we give an amazing personal experience to our guests.

He says the return of Jocky has been a welcome one. "He has great energy, a great dynamic, lots of knowledge and knows the business inside out. But having been away, he also brings a fresh perspective.

"Heston is around a lot these days – he's very involved in everything. Even though his house is in the south of France, he is here in the restaurant a lot - you never know when you might see him around."



The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

> The Fat Duck is the best it's ever been – that blows my socks off. Because, well, he created this place.

KARL JAQUES

HEAD CHEF

WHEN KARL JAQUES FIRST STEPPED INTO A KITCHEN AT THE AGE OF 14, IT WAS NOT AS A BUDDING YOUNG CHEF ARMED WITH KNIVES AND AMBITION, BUT AS A KITCHEN PORTER.

Those early shifts—scrubbing pans, tidying worktops, and absorbing the rhythm of professional service—laid the foundation for a career that has since taken him to the very top of one of the world's most celebrated restaurants.

"Initially, I wanted to be a carpenter. My father is a professional carpenter, and I was all set to become his apprentice. But when I was 14, my brother had a job as a kitchen porter. They needed someone else, so he talked the boss into giving me a job too. As soon as I set foot in a kitchen, I found the energy amazing."

After discovering his love for the craft, Karl enrolled at North Hertfordshire College, where he developed the technical skills and discipline that underpin fine dining. He then joined a family-run pub with rooms—the 18th-century Crown at Henlow—where, over almost eight years, he rose to the position of head chef.

London beckoned, and Karl began to look at opportunities in the capital. "Jason Atherton's City Social, which held a Michelin star, was looking for a chef de partie. Within two years, I had been promoted to sous chef"

He learned to lead under pressure and refine his understanding of contemporary British gastronomy.

"I also did a bit of work at Little Social; I think the plan was for me to go there eventually. But it just wasn't for me. I was getting on with the work fine, but the group never felt like my long-term goal. When I came out to The Fat Duck for a couple of days' trial, I instantly knew this is where I needed to be."

In 2018, Karl joined The Fat Duck as a chef de partie, where he was happy to drop a level in position to join a three-Michelin starred restaurant. Immersed in Heston Blumenthal's world of multi-sensory dining and culinary storytelling, he thrived under the guidance of the restaurant's leadership team. Over the years, his creativity and discipline earned him increasing responsibility. His commitment and drive culminated in a steady rise through the ranks until his appointment as Head Chef in December 2023. The gradual promotion—taking time to master each position before moving to the next—is something Karl feels has been lost in the profession in recent years.

"It's something I say all the time: it feels like everyone wants to be at the top of the ladder, but no one wants to climb it to get there. Everyone wants to be a sous chef, but you've got to work unbelievably hard to get there. I did that for 15 years.

"When I started at The Fat Duck, I was surrounded by so much talent. Everyone was hungry for progression; everyone had so much love for the restaurant and the world that they're in. We're still like that today, and we do like to progress people—but only when they're ready. Otherwise, we're not doing them, or us, any favours. Some people take

longer than others, and there can be some politics if you promote someone and it pisses someone else off. But if someone is deserving of it and ready, then it's just a fact. If they're on top form all the time, they deserve the promotion. But looking out into the industry, I don't see that willingness to stay at one level and learn it before being promoted anymore. There's been an attitude shift."

The kitchen culture at The Fat Duck is something Karl is particularly proud of. "I have witnessed not-so-great kitchen culture in the past, and I am definitely not like that. Don't get me wrong, people know where they stand with me—but I'm not there screaming at them. I'm not going to tear them down, throw something at them or abuse them. I just like to be upfront and honest.

"When we're in the kitchen, if things are going wrong for a section, then the guys get a bit of a wriggle on and try to fix it. But it's the way you manage it. Ultimately, if I lose control on the pass, then what does that do to 12 chefs? We stay calm. We treat each other with respect. That comes from Heston. I've not changed anything—it's just how The Fat Duck is.

"Because we're a partially open kitchen, if you're sat at table one, two or three, you can hear kitchen noise. So, I do try to keep noise right down. That's something that fogs my head—when there's too much noise. If it gets too much, I just ask everybody to chill out a bit. We've got service to run.

"The Fat Duck team is like any kitchen—lots of characters. There will always be things that happen. People are going to fall out—they spend a lot of time together. But ultimately there's a really good culture. Everybody has each other's backs. None of this hiding-things mentality or trying to stitch people up. We just

wouldn't have it. And I've experienced that in my past; I would spot it if it happened."

With The Fat Duck's new opening days, the whole kitchen team benefits from reduced hours. "They love it. We've gone from six days open with 12 services, to open just Wednesday to Sunday. Now we have a bit of breathing space, which is where we should be in a restaurant like this. We were very tight during the six days; now we've dropped, it is a lot more manageable. I'm still on the lookout for a couple more chefs, but we won't just take anyone on. To come in as a chef de partie, they need to have a bit about them."

The change has also allowed uninterrupted time for maintenance. "The first week of the new opening days we had a new boiler fitted and a fridge repaired. It was blissful not having to dance around tradespeople while we were getting on with lunch prep!"

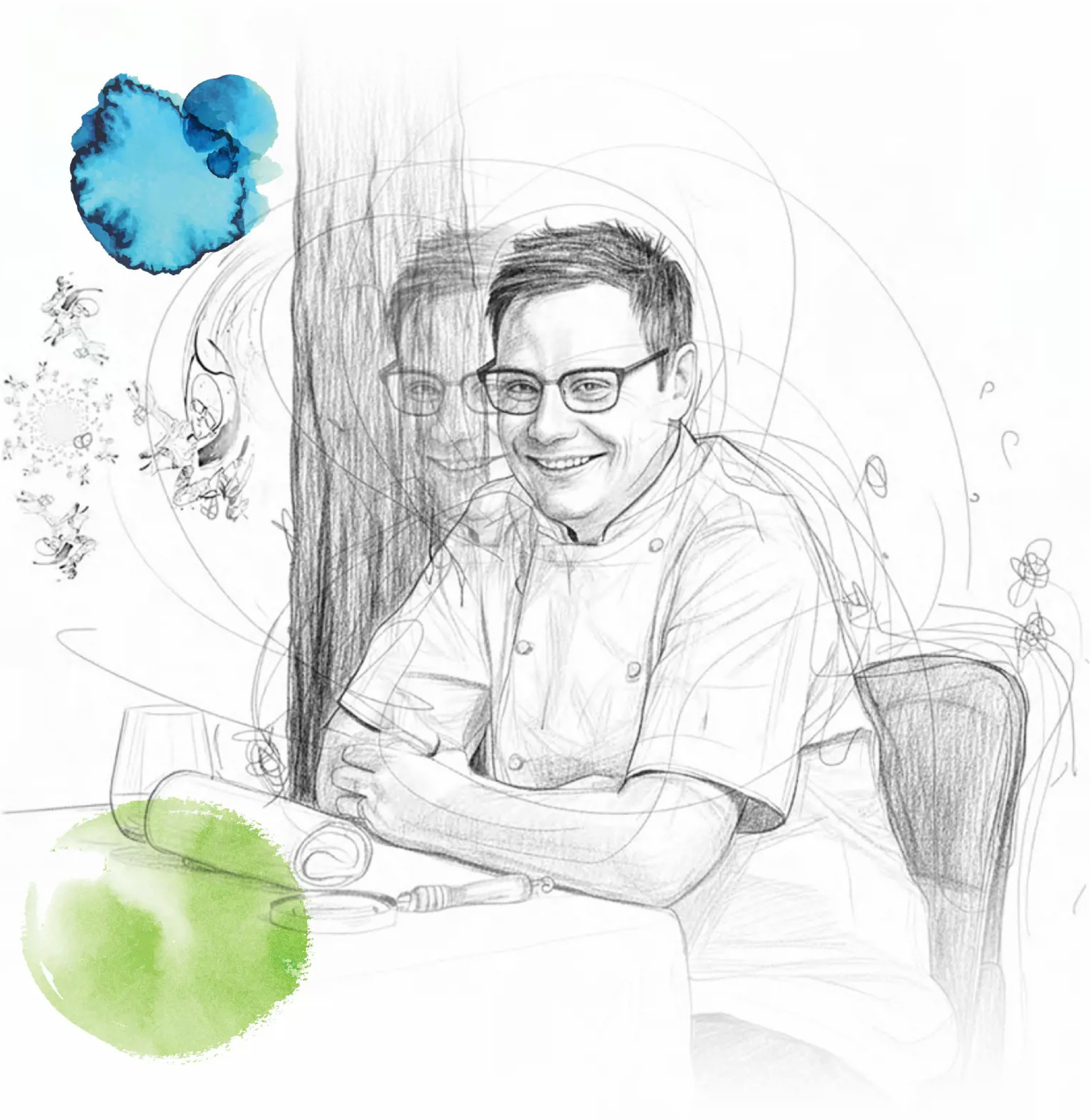
Bringing back the à la carte menu as part of The Fat Duck's 30th anniversary was, Karl admits with a laugh, "Challenging at first but I'm so glad we did it. It's a 3/3/3 choice menu that sits alongside our tasting menu. There's a little bit of crossover, because we must be mindful of food waste. If we're prepping for nine other courses on an à la carte and none of them appear on the tasting menu, and you don't sell those dishes, that creates unnecessary food waste.

"We've noticed that some people come in, who have booked the à la carte, and ask to change to tasting once they've sat down. A couple of weeks ago on a Sunday night we had 12 à la carte booked, yet 10 of them opted for the tasting menu instead. I never say no, because it's just not in me. I don't want to say no to a guest. But still—we were prepped for 12 à la carte!"

The shift also changed service flow. "Before we reintroduced the à la carte, lunch was 12pm to 1.15pm, and dinner 7pm to 8.15pm—a couple of tables every 15 minutes. What we found was we'd have 20 of the same courses away at once. It took a lot from whoever was on the pass to make sure we staggered and managed it. Then we added à la carte.

"Now we do 12pm to 2.30pm and 6pm to 9pm, which slows everything down a bit. We don't find things bottlenecking any more—maybe six of the same course away, rather than 26. With a full restaurant having 12 courses each, it's a lot of food—and a lot of plates. We have a brilliant team of seven kitchen porters, with three on at once, because there's a lot of plateware and a lot of everything!"

Despite the challenges, the return of à la carte has been a success. "It works well. Though our guests are always surprising us," Karl laughs. "They'll request extra sharing dishes, an extra starter, or a pudding for the table. But it's all manageable, and it's a good indication that they're buying into the whole experience. They're loving being at the restaurant and just want to experience everything."



MY FAVOURITE DISH AT THE FAT DUCK?

"For a long time, it was the Mock Turtle Soup. But we've just put on an à la carte dish that is duck liver with cherry purée and almond fluid gel. It's mega."

WHAT MY FRIENDS THINK I DO

"We [hospitality professionals] live in this world where conversations around food, chefs, dishes and menus take on this 'other' language. We can chat far deeper than most, without the need for elaboration. But to those not from the profession—some of my friends, for example—what do they think I do?

"It's interesting. Sometimes I feel like I don't make sense when I explain what we've been working on. Chefs understand, but those not in the sector—not so much! Especially when I go out with my wife and her friends and their husbands —they're always asking what we're working on. When I explain it, they don't get it! But they know what The Fat Duck is. To explain it properly, you have to experience it.

"It always makes me laugh because I'm just like, 'This is our world, right?' It's not extraordinary for us—it's usual. But other people, when they find out what I do for a living, I get bombarded with questions about different chefs and this, that and the other. The public are fascinated with food, chefs and what we all do for a living! We really are a foodie nation, and I think that's great"

WHERE I WANT TO GO AND EAT

"L'Enclume, for sure. I've never even been up to the Lake District! My auntie has just moved there, so she's said my wife and I can stay with her, and she'll look after the kids. So, Simon Rogan is top of my list, and I'll definitely take her up on the offer!"

The Fat Duck

heston blumenthal

> “There’s always something to tweak. But that’s the joy of The Fat Duck. Most restaurants would stop at version two; here, we have the luxury of pushing until it’s truly the best.”

SOPHIE MCNALLY

HEAD PASTRY CHEF

AT THE FAT DUCK, WHERE FOOD IS PHILOSOPHY AND DESSERT IS THEATRE, THE PASTRY KITCHEN HUMS WITH QUIET PRECISION.

Behind it all is Sophie McNally, recently appointed Head Pastry Chef, whose journey has taken her from university lecture halls to Melbourne fine dining and, ultimately, back home to Bray. Sophie talks about resisting stereotypes, learning to love discipline, and why her best ideas come while running. Like several chefs of her generation, Sophie first followed an 'expected' academic path.

"When I was younger, I loved watching Jamie Oliver and Heston on TV, and I knew I wanted to be a chef. But at school, the expected route was GCSEs, A-Levels, university. So, I studied biology, but during my degree I realised I didn't want to go into research or teaching. Every spare moment I had, I was cooking. That's when I knew I had to revisit that passion."

Somewhat spurred on by her elder brother's career pivot, Sophie found the courage to explore what she knew she truly wanted to do. "My brother had gone into a grad scheme, and he hated it. He left and became a police officer instead – which he loves. Watching him made me realise I didn't have to compromise either. I was inspired by him going against everything he was expected to do and chasing something he wanted to do. In my final year of university, when everyone was talking about what they would do next, all I could think was that I wanted to be a chef."

After graduating, Sophie enrolled at Leith's School of Food and Wine in West London, "Leith's was amazing. Every day we'd get incredible ingredients, learn to cook with them, and then take them home. It felt like the best decision I could have made. It was amazing learning, and I just had the most incredible time. But this did mean, post-university, that by the time I entered a professional kitchen

for the first time, I was 22. Which is quite late, I think. Sometimes you meet chefs that are 22 and they're in quite senior positions and have worked in loads of restaurants. It can be daunting when you're a bit older. I had done a couple of stages in London when I was in Leith's. But I was looking for my first chef job aged 22.

Undeterred, Sophie found she didn't have to travel far from home in Gerrards Cross for her first commis chef job. "My first job was at The Hinds Head – Heston's pub," she laughs. "I worked larder, garnish, fish and resisted pastry at first because of the stereotype that women in kitchens 'belong' in pastry."

A year in Australia followed. "Though I only worked for six months because of the visa. I was in Melbourne at Vue de Monde under Chef Shannon Bennett – it is a place that emphasises luxury but also honesty, integrity and flavour. It was a big team, super detail-orientated but everyone was there to help each other. I really loved the culture, and so I knew that, when I returned to the UK, I would want to find somewhere that shared a similar ethos.

"It was while I was at Vue du Monde that I committed to pastry. And I absolutely loved it. So, I thought, even though the stereotype of a female chef has been in pastry and that annoys me – why should I ignore what I want to do, just to stay away from the stereotype? I had already worked the other sections, and I can work larder, fish, meat and garnish. But I love pastry. Pastry suits my mindset. I like regimented styles. With pastry, if you follow the recipe, it works every time. With savoury food, it's more about instinct. I prefer the precision."

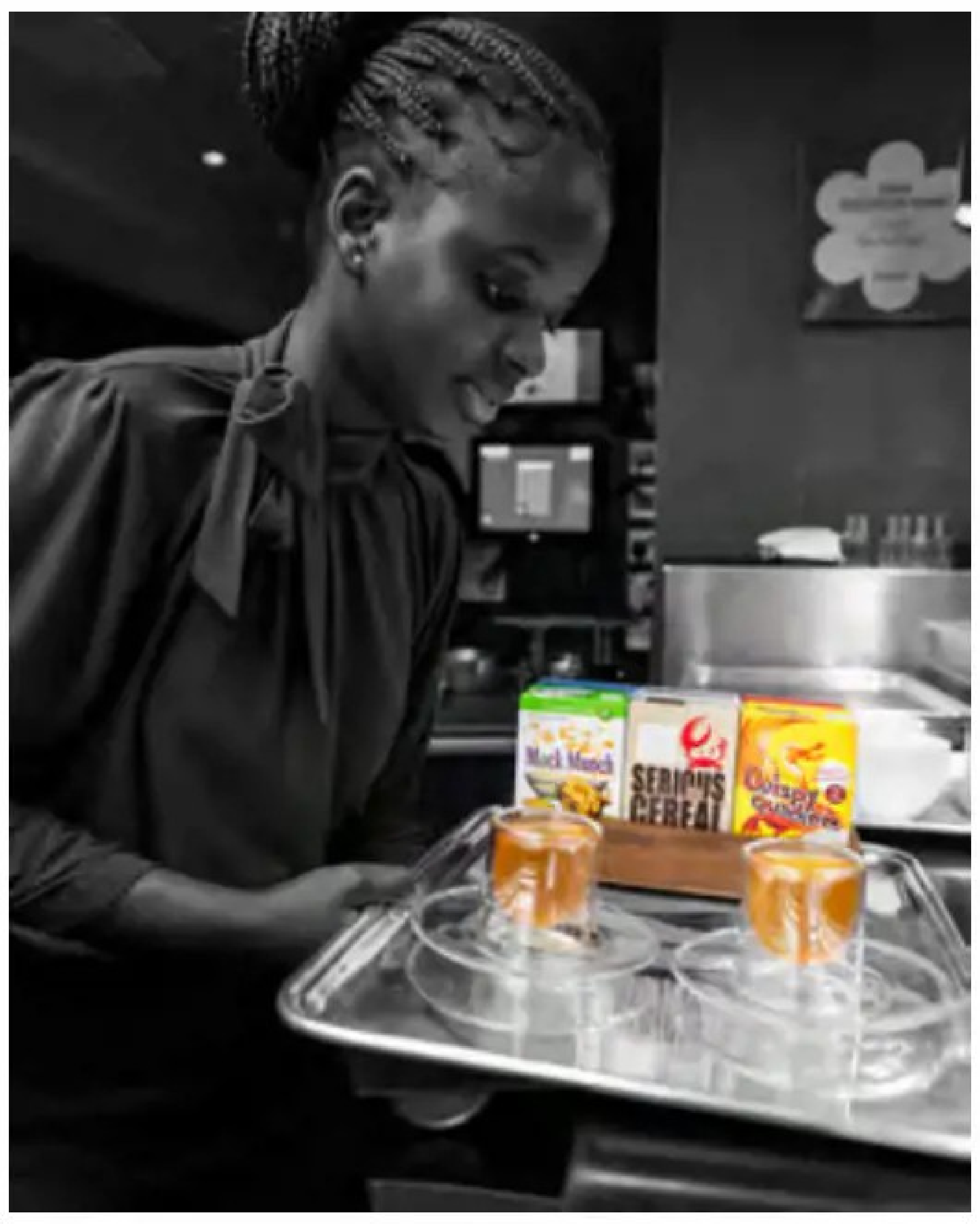
In 2019, Sophie returned to the UK and joined The Fat Duck as commis, later promoted to chef de partie, then junior sous. "The industry was still very competitive when I returned to the UK. I was told there were 35 people that applied for two commis chef roles, and they hired me! It's very different now with Brexit - it's a lot less competitive, but obviously still difficult to get the job. I feel so lucky to have had such a successful career with The Fat Duck."

In 2023, a permanent move to pastry as pastry sous chef before taking on the role of head pastry chef role at the beginning of the year.

"I was thrilled to get the position at the start of the year. In a way, I'd been preparing for it for a while - I'd been running the pastry section since Francesco Genovese left, about two years ago."

Est. 1995
TEA CAKE
MILK CHOCOLATE

Mock Munch
SERIOUS CEREAL
Quispy Quackers



SERIOUS CEREAL
BRICK BITES
Pillow Puffs

Mock Munch
SERIOUS CEREAL
Quispy Quackers

Now leading a team of 10 pastry chefs, Sophie balances service with development, working closely with The Fat Duck's development team. I ask how she finds the constant questioning that defines The Fat Duck's approach?

"At first it feels like you're never getting it right because there's always something to tweak. But that's the joy of The Fat Duck. Most restaurants would stop at version two; here, we have the luxury of pushing until it's truly the best.

"A recent example was the Pinot Noir dessert created for a Domaine de la Romanée-Conti event. Inspired by the restaurant's iconic dish, Botrytis Cinerea, it was reimagined through the lens of fine Burgundy. We worked, reworked and refined the dish multiple times – each time discovering more. The whole development team are so curious and, of course, Jocky is an extraordinary pastry chef. We really do have the best environment to be as curious and creative as possible and to make things happen.

"I'm very lucky with my team. The pastry team has been pretty stable to be honest. I think I've managed to retain staff and bring in new people when others have left. Ten sounds like a lot – but the Sweet Shop takes two full-time pastry chefs. That's all they do. And then we have a couple hours a week where everyone stops their jobs and we all help to package it all together. It's very time-consuming but it's super unique to The Fat Duck and the guests adore it."

ON HER FAVOURITE DESSERT AT THE FAT DUCK

"The Black Forest Gâteau. I love that it looks so simple - a neat chocolate square with cherry and almond feuilletine base, a kirsch ganache. On the inside it's an intricate layering of sponge, mousse, ganache, cherries, and more. It's technically complex but joyful to eat. Each element on its own is delicious and then you put it all together and it's the best thing ever. There's an aerated chocolate layer, a sponge soaked with kirsch syrup, then cherry, white chocolate mousse and a dark chocolate mousse. It is topped with Amarena cherry and then a vanilla stick – incredible.

The team works mainly with Valrhona chocolate, though single-origin producer Xoco has recently also made its mark. "Their flavours blew our minds," she says, "chocolate being crafted as a single origin opens so

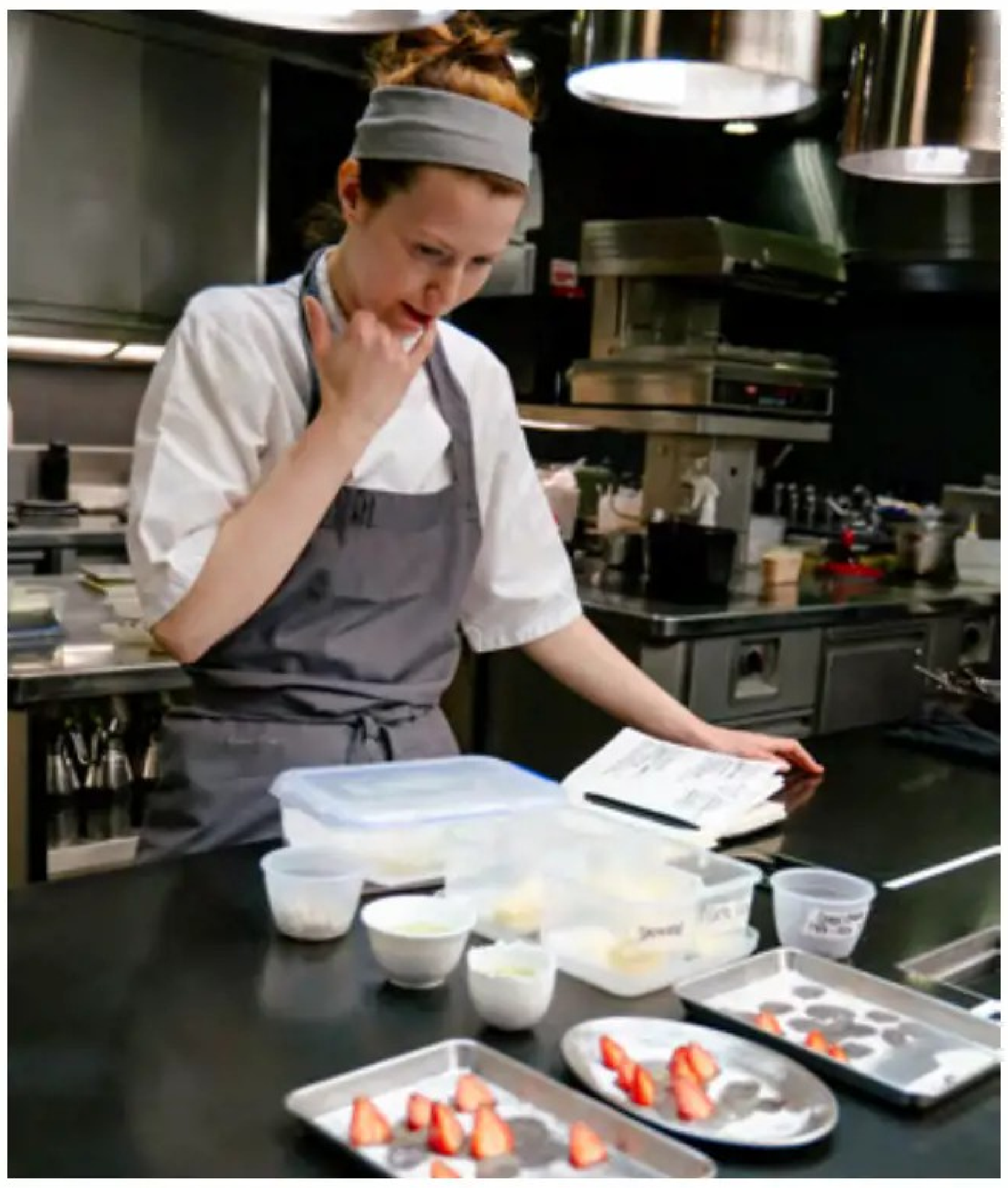
many distinctive flavour profiles. We use that sometimes in ganaches where you might be able to benefit from those profiles. It is an expensive ingredient, so you want it to display the characteristics you are looking for."

AND LIFE OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN

Despite the demands of the role, Sophie makes space for balance.

"I run. A lot. I started about a year ago, and now I do long distances. It gives me mental clarity – it's where a lot of my ideas come

QUAINTLY QUANTUM
FLAVOUR-FLIPPING
PASTILLES
AM I A FRUIT AND/OR A VEGETABLE?
PEEL



MINI
Planet
Heston
Heston's
THE DUCK
MINDFUL
MOLECULAR
SNAIL
QUAIL
PARSNIP
CRAB
CEREAL
BISCUIT
PORRIDGE
Orange

Sweet Shop
The Fat Duck

from. I have gone from no physical exercise to absolutely loving running, and there are so many great places around here to run. At work, I sometimes find it quite difficult to think creatively - because I'm in quite an intense environment and there's lots of things going on. But then I lace up my trainers, go for a run and ideas or solutions come.

"I also love to go out. It's like I think where my first joy came from - going out to eat in nice restaurants. My favorite thing, casually, is obviously just delicious food from people that love to cook tasty food, but nothing too fancy. But I also love an occasion place. I would love to get to Ynyshir at some point – it looks amazing. It's far away, but I have a feeling that it will be worth making the journey up to North Wales. I will save it for a special occasion though."

The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

> “Two days later, as I was walking down a street in London, I got a call offering me a commis de rang position at The Fat Duck. I was literally jumping up and down with joy in the middle of the city! I wanted to work there so badly.”

MELANIA BELLESINI

HEAD SOMMELIER

ED TO SELL BEERS, WINES AND SPIRITS FOR CONSUMPTION ON THESE PREMISES

AT THE FAT DUCK, WHERE FOOD AND THEATRE INTERTWINE, THE WINE LIST IS EVERY BIT AS IMAGINATIVE AS THE MENU.

Guiding guests through that journey is Melania Bellesini, the restaurant's Head Sommelier, who has been shaping the experience with her knowledge, warmth and curiosity since 2018.

Melania grew up in Mantova, northern Italy, surrounded by a culture where wine is part of everyday life. Aged almost 16, she entered the Italian Sommelier Association's Best Junior Sommelier competition.

"I entered by accident", she laughs, "I was supposed to be doing a Barista competition, but my lecturer replaced me with someone else as he didn't think I would be good enough. I was very angry, so to redeem himself, he entered me for a wine competition. I was only around 15 at the time – not even the legal drinking age!"

Melania competed against a group of mostly male candidates – all several years older and more experienced than she was. "Out of complete surprise, I was suddenly in the final. I was terrified because I then only had a week and a half study of wine during my lessons. My teachers were very comprehensive; they allowed me time off from my lessons to study."

At the end of the day as the results were announced, Melania was declared the winner, "I said what? Are you sure? I did not expect to go that far in this competition – I was the baby of the group of candidates – and female."

Winning the competition set Melania on the path of becoming a sommelier. The first prize was a course at the Associazione Italiana di Sommelier. "The course is now globally recognised as one of the best. It sits over three levels. I did it in 1998, and at the time, a Sommelier was a very niche job. It still is a very niche job but it's much more open now.

"Back then, the world of sommelier was male-dominated. When I started the three courses, I was the only female. By the time I was coming to the end, there were perhaps five or six females – out of 100 people on the course, all aged between 25 and 30 years old. I was still a teenager. It was quite overwhelming, but I loved it."

By the time Melania had finished both her school and the AIS training, she was still just 21. "I started travelling. I travelled a lot in Italy, always working in restaurants, always looking to be in Michelin-starred places, somewhere with high quality service. I worked service, because still at that time, the domain of the sommelier was male, it was not accepted for a woman to be a sommelier in that calibre of place. I accepted that I would work front of house - and I wanted to - but I always ended up assisting with wine service!"

In 2005, Melania decided she wanted to improve her English, so accepted a completely different style of hospitality job – at Disney World. I flew to America by myself not knowing that when I arrived, I would be completely surrounded by fellow Italians!" Instead of staying the full 18 months, Melania stayed for 6 months. "The experience was incredible, but it was too touristy for me. When I decided to leave, they discovered that I was a sommelier and they offered me a very good position, but I had already made up my mind to come back."

Arriving back in Italy, she joined the now two-Michelin-starred Villa Feltrinelli in Lake Garda. "And then from there I went to northern part of Italy to a beautiful restaurant that gained three Michelin star a few years ago. Again, I was front of house but also helping with wine service."

Aged 29, Melania still felt she needed to immerse herself more fully in English. "I really needed to step up. I researched the Michelin Guide in the UK and decided that England is the only place close to my family where I can properly learn the language. I sent my CV to many places in London, looking for two or three Michelin-starred restaurants. And, though I sent my CV in, I didn't really know that much about The Fat Duck."

She did a couple of interviews in the Capital, but they failed to excite her that much. Then she was invited to come to Bray to observe service at The Fat Duck. "When I came here, I couldn't believe this magical world I had entered. I had never seen anything like this before. I wanted to work here so badly."

Though applying for a sommelier role, her desire to be at The Fat Duck was so strong that Melania said she would be open to anything. "But I didn't think they would call me back. My English really was nowhere near good enough to be in that team.

"Then two days later, as I was walking down a street in London, I got a call offering me a commis de rang position at The Fat Duck. I was literally jumping up and down with joy in the middle of the City!"

Melania joined The Fat Duck in April 2011. What began as front-of-house training soon became a clear focus on wine, and as soon as the chance came up, she stepped into the sommelier team. "Isa Bal was the head sommelier at the time. He spoke with me and said that perhaps, in the future, there could be availability for me in the sommelier team. I was happy. I wanted to work here regardless - even though, at the same time that I received the offer from The Fat Duck, a beautiful Relais Chateaux resort in Tuscany offered me a head sommelier role with them. I decided to take the harder route – take 3 or 4 steps backwards in my career and rebuild it. Be humble and challenge myself."

Because of her ability and desire to learn, after just a few months Melania stepped into the role of chef de rang - where she honed her skills in guest relations and table management for more than a year. Within just a few months more she was moved to the role of pass master—the crucial link between kitchen and front of house. It was a demanding position, requiring absolute focus, but one she embraced. "Everything passed through you from both sides," she recalls. "It was very high concentration, very mentally taxing." The experience, though draining, proved invaluable. Standing at the pass, she learned how the entire restaurant functioned, knowledge that later helped her manage tables with a broader understanding of both the dining room and the kitchen.

But something was missing. Wine had always been her true passion, and although she was not part of the sommelier team, she asked to be included in their training from the very beginning. "I said, I'm fine not to have a sommelier position, but I'd like to keep training with you."

For two years, alongside long shifts and studying English and the menu at home, she dedicated her only day off to wine. She joined tastings, travelled to London for pairings, and shadowed the sommelier team whenever she could.

FREE SPIRIT
2024

Far from being an outsider, she found herself welcomed into their fold. "They always made me feel like I was one of them," she says. That encouragement built her confidence, and when Isa Bal, then Head Sommelier, offered her a permanent place on the team, she didn't hesitate. "I didn't even think much. I just said, okay, I will stay."

In 2014, Melania considered leaving The Fat Duck for ventures new. "But then we heard the news that we would be temporarily relocating the restaurant to Australia. That was my dream. It was one of the best experiences of my life. The company did an amazing job trying to prepare ourselves for how big it would be, but we were not even closely prepared! It was huge and it was incredible."

When The Fat Duck returned to in Bray after its residency in Australia, it was a markedly different place. Not solely because of the extensive refurbishment, but also because Heston was implementing something never seen before.

"This is when we introduced the personalisation of the menus. By sending guests a questionnaire in the lead up to their dining experience, where they would share their food memories, likes, dislikes, special occasions etc – we would have an idea of how the kitchen could create something magical – that directed the guest back to those memories.

"Obviously, this meant the service had to change as well. It was a menu that had never existed before, so we really built the concept.

"We had one month of training in the September, with Heston talking through his ideas of what he wanted. During this month, Heston brought in specialists to help us. I have such beautiful memories of a ballerina spending the day with us, training us how to move gracefully, to choreograph ourselves without bumping into one another, if you like.

"We had training with actors of West End theatres. They helped us understand how the tone, voice and pronunciation of our words is vital. We have to use our voice, because we are performing. Technically, service is a performance. We are all actors – and it was an incredible privilege to be shaped by such professionals.

"We had a lot of people coming in to talk about psychology, and a professor from London came to explain the sensation of taste. How our palate works, how our face muscles work, all about taste buds. We had all sorts of experiments to help us understand dishes, so we could, in turn, help our guests understand them, too.

"It was truly fascinating to have a concept that is linked to memories and emotion. Sometimes, we would experience guests overcome with emotion because they were having a dish that directed them back to childhood memories, something they hadn't thought about for years. I still have goosebumps when I see that, and I have been here for 14 years. It is incredible how Heston linked food and emotion. Nobody had done that before in this way. Yet it has a very strong connection.

"Heston also has an incredible palate when it comes to wine. His family often travelled to France, and they were big wine connoisseurs. He grew up with an appreciation of, and passion for, wine. For him, food and wine are one. This is what I try to achieve with our wine pairings, a merge between wine and food. Sometimes you have beautiful food and a beautiful wine, but together they clash. Sometimes you choose your wine based on what your brain tells you is what you like. And that's perfectly fine.

"This can mean that you haven't thought about how that wine tastes with the food. If you want a merge or pairing that is going to work, I believe it is super important to find the right balance. Sometimes you discover a wine, or a drink, that may not be to your palate on its own - yet try it with the dish and it is a perfect match and enjoyable.

"If a guest isn't sure about a wine when they first try it on the pairing, I encourage them to try it with the food. If they still don't like it, that's okay, we can change, it's not a problem. Often, the guest will say that this was the best pairing. Even though they didn't like the wine in the beginning, or it was not to their taste, with the food it was just the perfect match. And for me, that's a win."

In 2017, Melania thought she had gone as far as she could at The Fat Duck, it was time to expand her horizons again. "I went to see Isa, and I said as much as I love this place, it was the time for me to go. I wanted to experience new challenges. I wanted to pursue a role as head sommelier somewhere. At The Fat Duck, I saw a solid team in which it was difficult to progress, especially with Isa at the head. I didn't see him leaving soon. I said I would like to go."

"We were sitting outside on the grass, and Isa revealed that in fact he was planning to leave, and wanted me to take the position of head sommelier."

Having Melania in his team reassured Isa that he could leave The Fat Duck in good hands. "I was terrified and I had to think about it. I said I wasn't 100% sure if I could fill Isa's shoes because they were massive. I was just a sommelier, still learning every day.

"Isa promised to stay with me for the first few months as I transitioned into the head sommelier role. The whole time he kept saying, 'You can make it. You can do it. You are the perfect person for this place.'

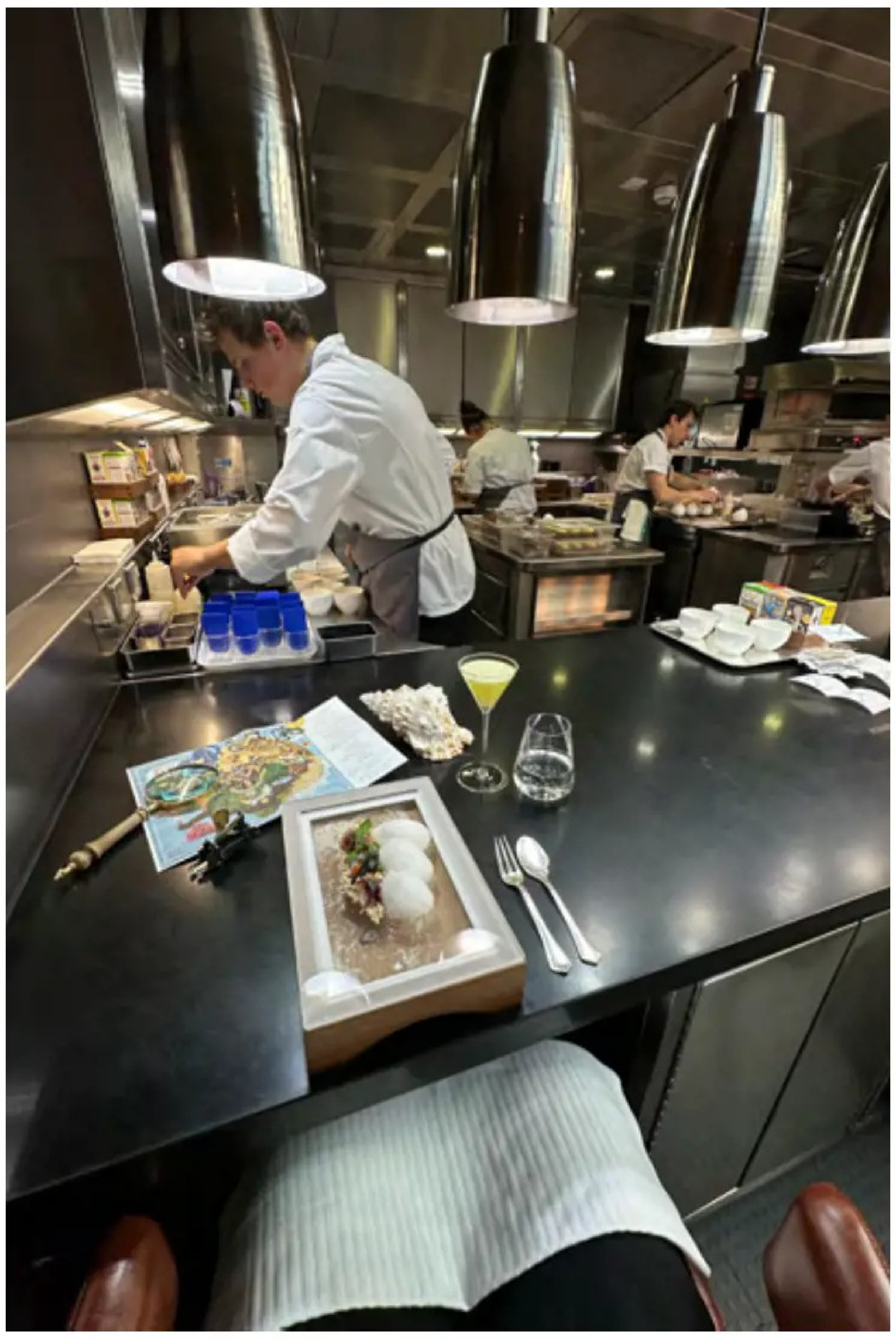
"Isa is not a person that compliments easily. If he had so much confidence in me, then I needed to believe in myself a bit more."

On January 1, 2018, Melania became the head sommelier of The Fat Duck. As Isa left, so did several of the sommelier team. This gave Melania an opportunity to build a new team. "I was terrified. Then I had to get my head around how to organise everything. I was helping Isa before. But alone is not the same. Nobody was telling me what to do. I had ideas that I could run past Isa before, now the decision on whether to implement those ideas fell to me.

"But the leadership team at The Fat Duck gave me so much psychological support. They believed in me. They gave me a lot of confidence in myself. Without them, I don't think I would have managed it."

ON SOFT PAIRINGS

"We started our soft pairings in 2018, long before it became so popular. When I saw we



had a lot of people driving or not drinking for personal reasons, I just saw it as a shame that the soft options were drinks such as Coca-Cola.

"I said to them team that serving a Coca-Cola with The Fat Duck experience was a pity, when we can offer much more than that. If we do magic with food, why can't we do magic with drinks? We started to build up non-alcoholic pairings and now it has become quite popular.

"Back in 2018, there was nothing in the soft-drink market, nowadays there is so much. We had to use our imagination and development expertise. We looked around for interesting products – or made our own. I found a kombucha in 2017 from a guy who had started his business in his garage. Now he's on the shelves of major supermarkets. He credits that, in part, to The Fat Duck being one of the first restaurants to believe in his product."

ON DEVELOPMENT

With so much development of both new and existing dishes a part of the everyday life at The Fat Duck, Melania must ensure that her wine pairings react to any tweak to a recipe or dish. "We have an agreement that when a dish is developed fully, from scratch, we are involved – not in the research of the dish. but in the evolution of the dish. We do a tasting once or twice a week as the dish develops.

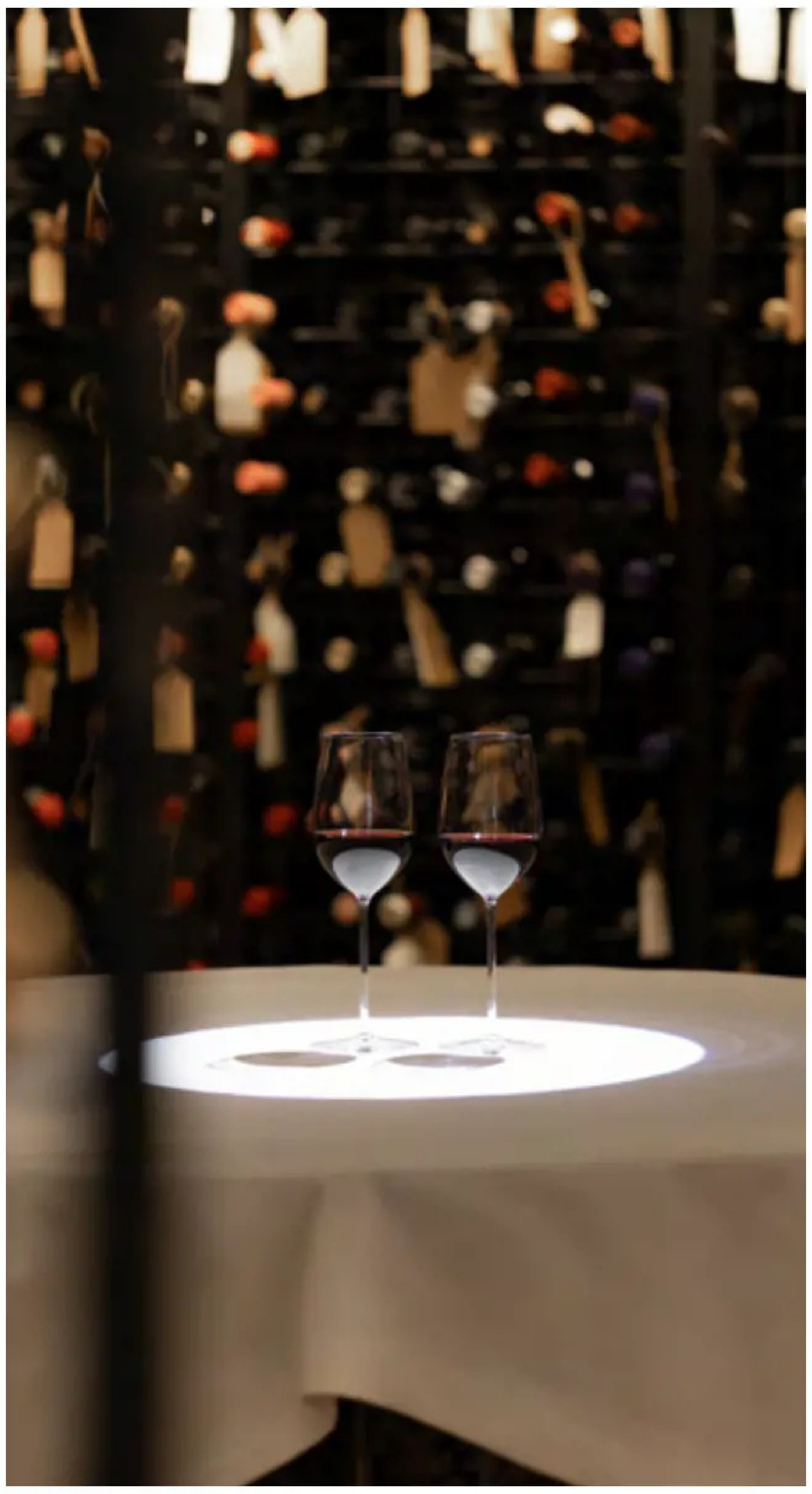
"At the beginning, we start to have an idea of a pairing and can start to look for different flavour profiles. In the middle, we begin to understand where the dish is heading, and we start to look at different pairings. At the end, we do a couple of tastings with the wines – or drinks – we have chosen.

"It's very important to have the merge between wine and food. I really want to have this partnership of flavours.

LA TÂCHE
ÉCHÉZEAUX

The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal



"The final tasting is at the pass, with the chefs. Everyone tries the dish, and together we finalise the choice of wine that goes with it. It's always a team effort, with everybody's input or observations welcome."

WHAT I LOOK FOR IN A YOUNG SOMMELIER

"Attitude. Because knowledge can be taught.

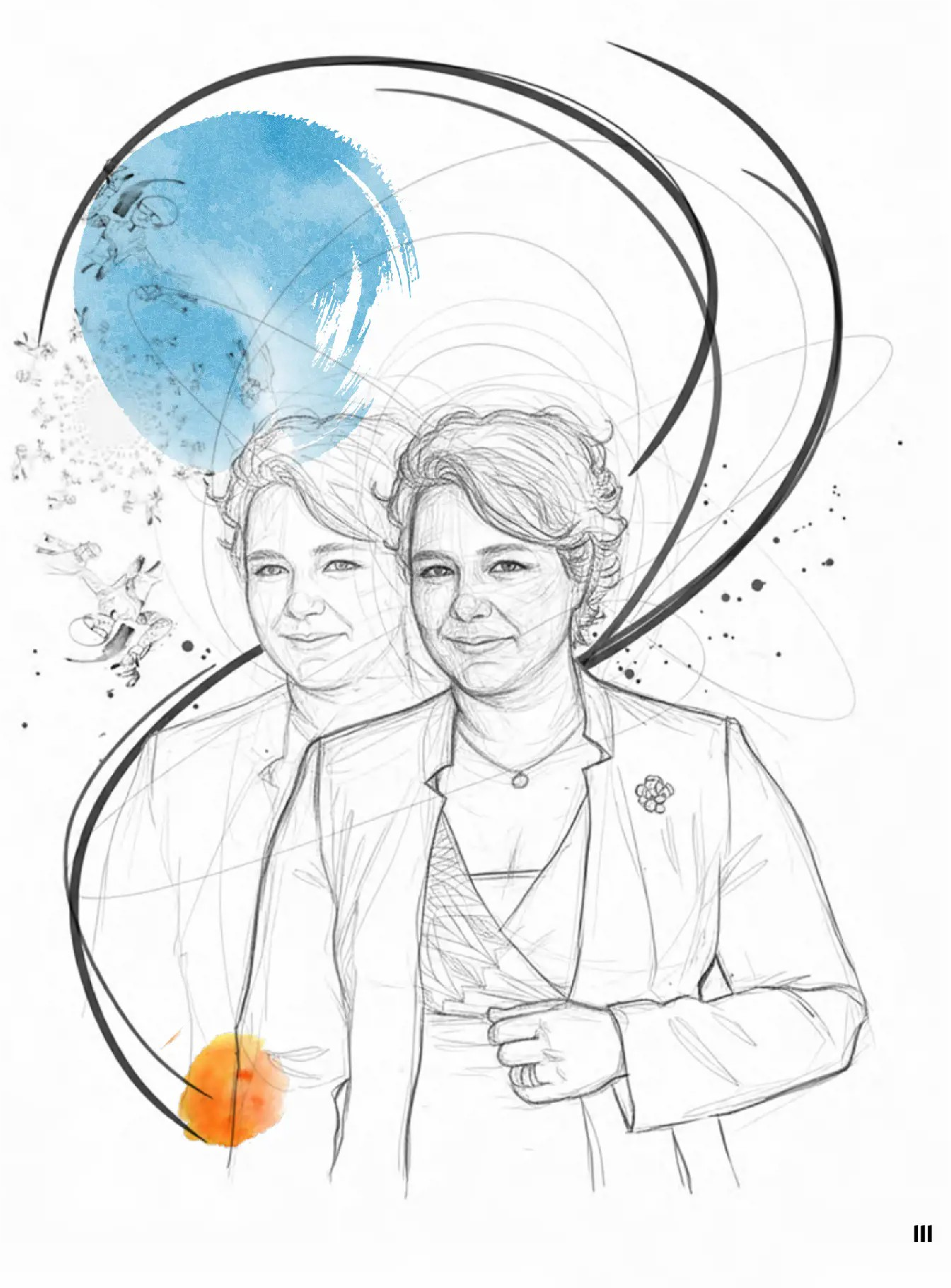
"What I have learned here since I started, through my journey as a manager. is that we have amazing people coming from all over the world who have studied wine, but I think sometimes people can lose their humbleness because they put so much into their studies - especially those who do a master sommelier or high-level WST.

"We should never lose the connection to be human. We should never think we know everything. We are always learning. I am still learning. If someone comes to me with the attitude that they know it all, I don't need them, thank you.

"It would be much more difficult for me to make a candidate like that work in a team like ours. We need to work together.

"How to serve a wine is easy. And with practice, you will get it.

"To be humble, to be a team player, that's what I look for." 🅲



The Fat Duck
heston blumenthal

> “It’s not because you are a mum that you cannot work in a restaurant. I proved that I could do it, and The Fat Duck proved they could support me as a parent and as an employee.”

FANNY
HOULETTE

RESTAURANT MANAGER

ONE OF THE LONGEST-STANDING TEAM MEMBERS AT THE FAT DUCK IS RESTAURANT MANAGER FANNY HOULETTE, WHO HAS BEEN WITH THE RESTAURANT FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS.

Born in Normandy and trained in hotel school, Fanny's first role in the UK was as a commis de rang at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons. After two years, she returned to France - yet she knew there was something waiting for her back in the UK.

"Because I was a commis at Le Manoir, and many of the team were French, I felt my English hadn't improved as much as I wanted. We spoke French all the time, and as a commis, I rarely spoke with guests. I knew I needed to return to the UK and spend time with a team where English would be the primary language. I sent my CV to several restaurants, and it turned

out the assistant manager at The Fat Duck was a former colleague of mine from Le Manoir. He said there was a space for me if I wanted to come for an interview.

"I didn't really know much about The Fat Duck, but I was offered a place and moved to Bray. It was a bit of a shock when I first joined - I didn't know we were using liquid nitrogen, for example! I had no idea at all. The service style I was used to was rigid and structured, like Le Manoir. The Fat Duck was more informal - still professional - but the service was part of the theatre of the meal. That surprised me. So much training, so many techniques, so much vocabulary, so much storytelling. I had to learn a lot in the beginning, and very fast."

The year was 2005. The Fat Duck had been awarded its third Michelin star the year before, but there were more accolades to come.

"The year I started was the year we were voted Best Restaurant in the World. That was a massive moment. I was thinking, 'Oh my God, why am I here?' It was crazy busy. People were travelling from all over the world just to eat at The Fat Duck. Yet still we pushed forward. When I joined, we had the du jour menu, à la carte, and tasting. We phased out the first two and moved to tasting menu only. We employed more people across every part of the operation. More development, more training - we were all going at 100%. Super exciting times."

Learning front-of-house skills in a restaurant with a months-long waiting list, while also working on her English, Fanny faced one more challenge.

"For the first year I was the only woman in the service team. It was very tough. I had to be tough. I had to prove I was as good as everyone else. That was hard. Today it's very different - we have a lot of women across The Fat Duck teams."

As Fanny rose through the ranks at The Fat Duck - taking on more responsibility - she was also raising her family. Twelve years ago, she gave birth to her first son. For many employers, that would have meant compromise. How could a mother realistically keep a full-time restaurant job when evenings and weekends were part of the role? But The Fat Duck isn't just any employer.

"After my maternity leave, I really wanted to come back to the floor. At first, there was concern about whether I could manage the hours. It was suggested I work in the office - but that is not me. I belong in the restaurant. I pushed back and said, 'My place is with the service team.' Heston and the team made it work. My partner was also working restaurant hours, and between his schedule and The Fat Duck adapting mine around childcare, my family had balance.

"It's not because you are a mum that you cannot work in a restaurant. I proved I could do it, and The Fat Duck proved they could support me as a parent and as an employee.

"Now my first son is twelve - and I've just returned from maternity leave again this year with my second, who's 14 months old!"

When, in 2015, The Fat Duck relocated to Australia for six months, Fanny knew she had to be part of it.

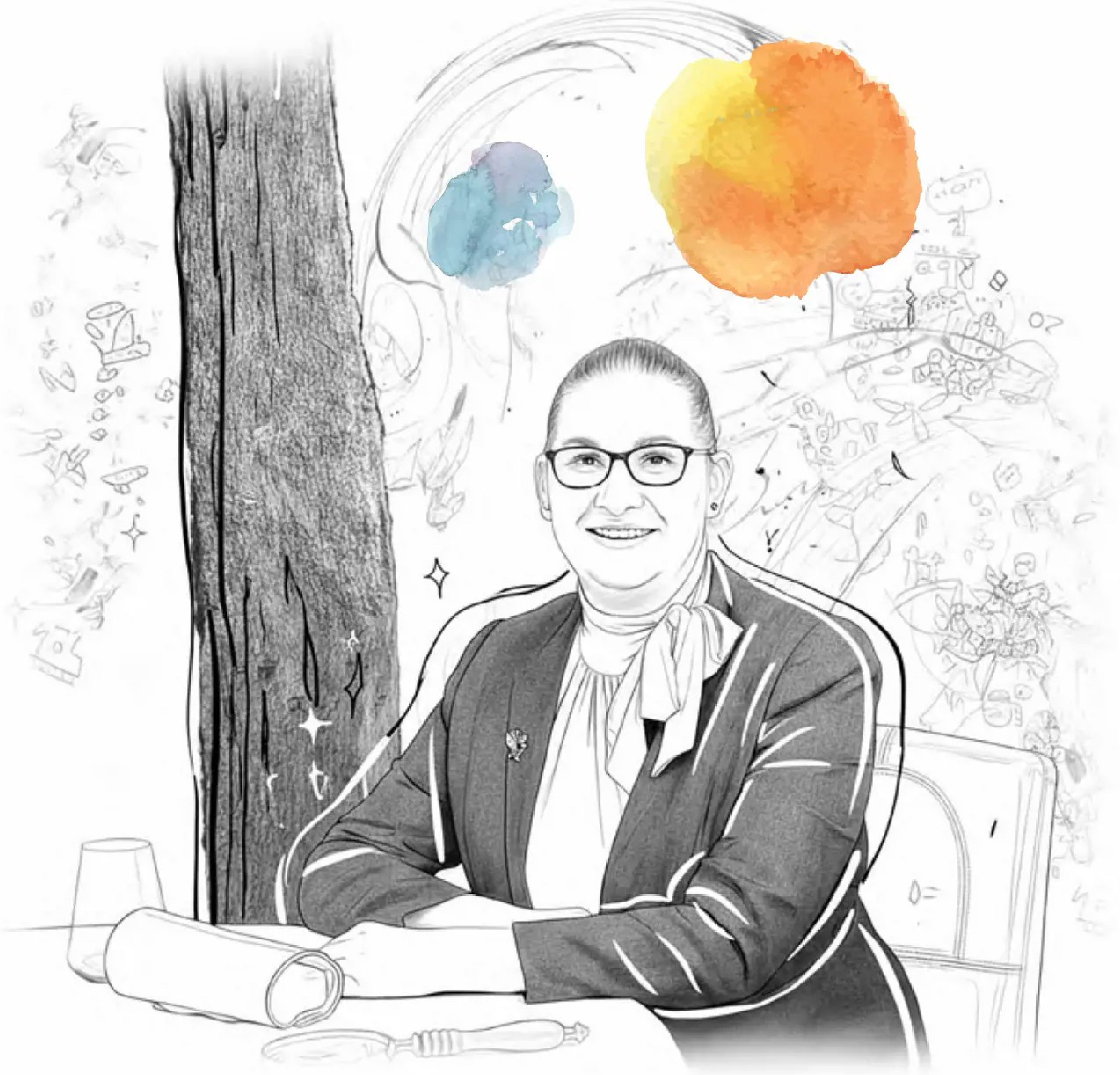
"I was there as well. I couldn't go for the whole period because my son was only two and a half. I went for the first two weeks, leaving him at home with his father. I knew I had to do it - the relocation was always going to be part of The Fat Duck's story. How could I explain it to guests later if I hadn't lived it?

"I returned to the UK, collected my son, and went back to Australia for a month and a half. The Fat Duck organised childcare for me, and accommodation was arranged. It was amazing. Again - it's not because you have kids that you can't do it. I managed to look after my son and work at the same time. And back then, my partner was in the UK, so I was doing it alone. It was an incredible experience. I loved Australia, and we were looked after so well."

Four months ago, Fanny returned from maternity leave once again, this time stepping up as Restaurant Manager - a position that had once felt so far from reach when she was a young commis with little English. She also

CHURCH LANE
CUL-DE-SAC
HIGH
STREET

THE JOURNEY
THE JOURNEY
WELCOME
Nitro-poached Aperitif "Lime Grove"
Aerated Nitro Beetroot, Horseradish



returned just as The Fat Duck reintroduced an à la carte menu to celebrate its 30th anniversary.

"I had held the position of Assistant Restaurant Manager for years, and on my return was offered the promotion. Seeing the à la carte back, I thought, 'Oh hello, you!' I like having it back, although sometimes guests book for the à la carte and then decide to opt for tasting when they arrive. We try to accommodate, but it can be a juggle. Being closed for extra lunch services means we only do a couple of relays midweek, so if guests change their choice of menu, we must be creative with timings.

"My front-of-house team is around 20 now. But with the new schedule - closed Monday and Tuesday all day, plus lunch Wednesday and Thursday - we have a better structure. The team has more time off during the week.

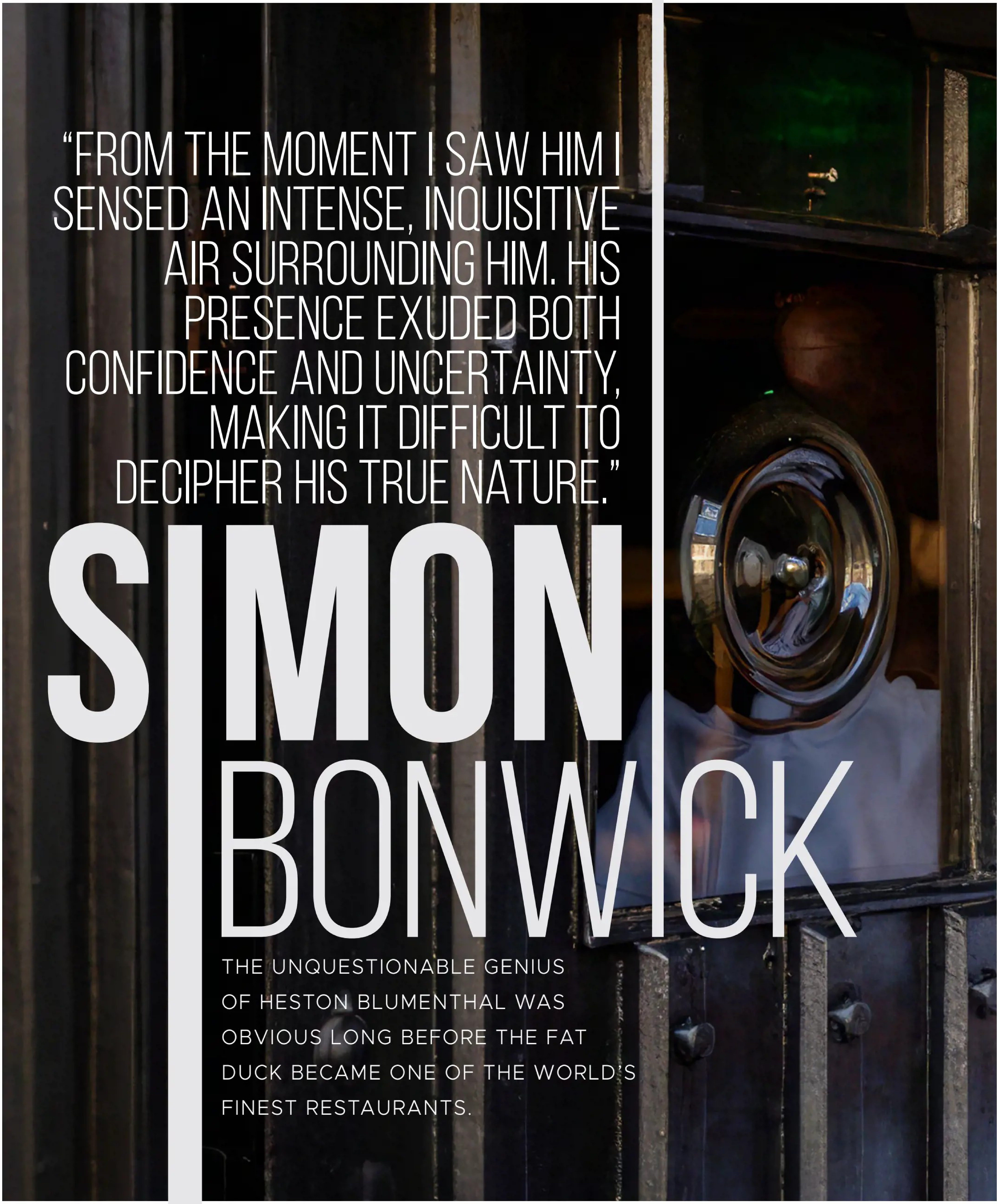
"Whenever I speak to new candidates for front of house, I always ask if they can see themselves at The Fat Duck. Not every restaurant is the same, and it's important they understand how we work. Is this kind of interaction with guests for you—or not? It isn't for everyone. Sometimes candidates don't have experience, but you just know they'd be a good fit.

"Once you join, you need to be willing to learn all the time, to invest in everything we do, to be humble and open-minded. Some dishes can be challenging to explain, and there's a lot of guest interaction. Communication without stuffiness, knowledge, observation - these are things we help to develop. There's also the theatre element. Not just in how dishes are described or delivered, but with props, and even the colour-changing lighting system above each table, which we operate manually. It's a byproduct of Heston's vision, but it's also so helpful - we can look across the restaurant and instinctively know which table is on which course!

"When you're established in front of house, you need to read guests well. What do they want from you? Sometimes they just want to be left alone - especially bigger tables. They've come from all over the world, meeting as friends, family, or colleagues. They just want to enjoy each other's company. You need to be able to read that.

"And fun. For me, it's so important my team has fun. How can our guests enjoy themselves if my team are miserable? You need to be yourself, show your personality, and enjoy what you do. That's what matters."

Words Emily Bridgwater
Images Simon Bonwick



> “FROM THE MOMENT I SAW HIM I SENSED AN INTENSE, INQUISITIVE AIR SURROUNDING HIM. HIS PRESENCE EXUDED BOTH CONFIDENCE AND UNCERTAINTY, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER HIS TRUE NATURE.”

SIMON BONWICK

THE UNQUESTIONABLE GENIUS OF HESTON BLUMENTHAL WAS OBVIOUS LONG BEFORE THE FAT DUCK BECAME ONE OF THE WORLD’S FINEST RESTAURANTS.

During the mid-90s, Simon Bonwick worked there when Heston first took over the building and turned it into a French bistro.

Joining in 1995, Simon was part of a crew which included Heston himself, a head chef he refers to affectionately in his book, Cooking, Art & Schizzle, as 'Aunt Sally' and a sous chef named Miguel.

Simon said that he knew even in those very early days, something special was in the making.

"Once a humble pub, it had been transformed into a restaurant that was already promising that the cooking was worth the detour, although the honour with which it was yet to be bestowed, it really was offering a fabulous dining experience in such a short space of time," he said.

Simon explained that it was "curiosity" that drew him to the restaurant, and he wasn't disappointed. "I had heard whispers of a talented chef-patron who was creating a buzz in the culinary world.

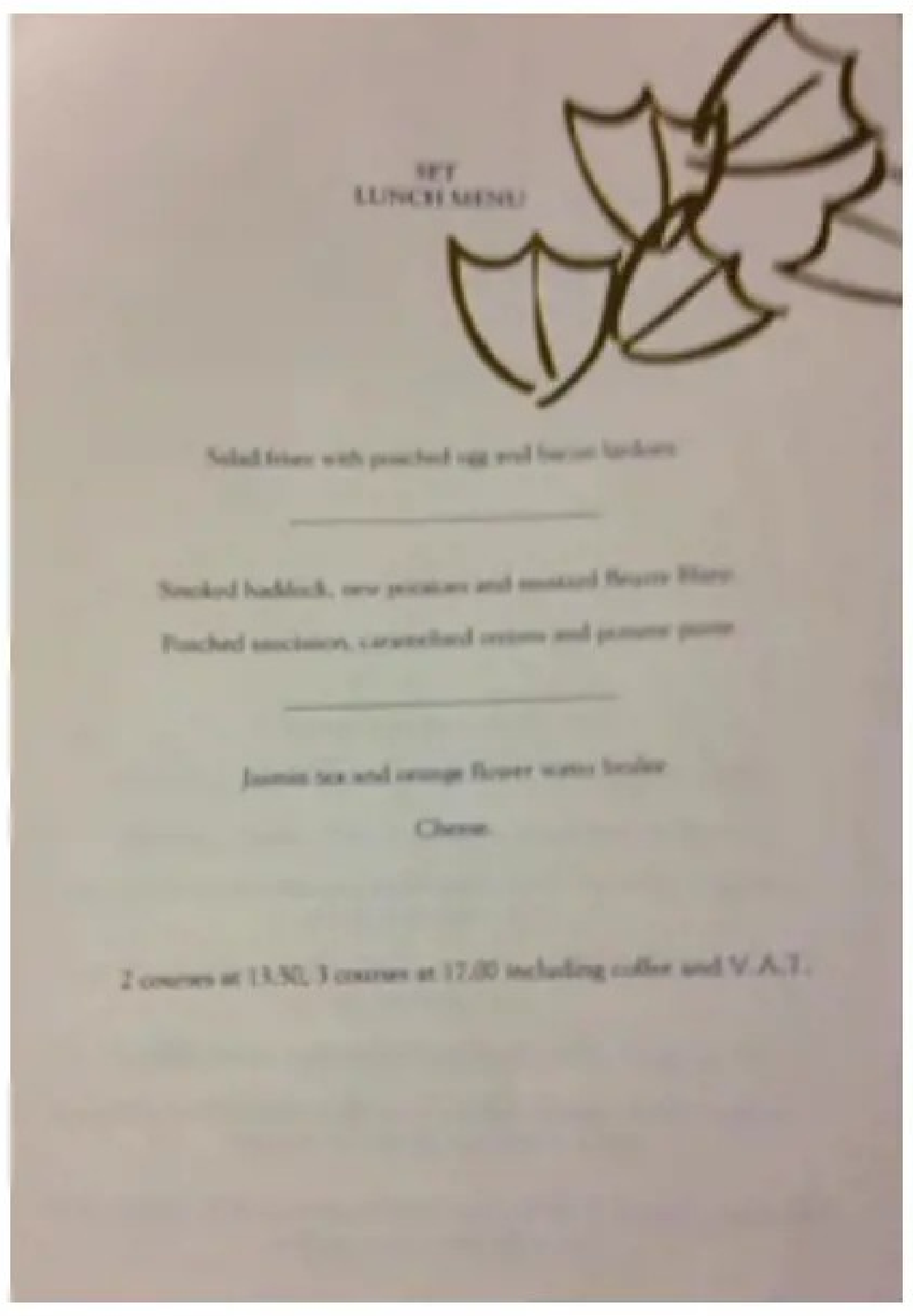
"From the moment I saw him I sensed an intense inquisitive air surrounding him. His presence exuded both confidence and uncertainty, making it difficult to decipher his true nature."

Simon, who has recently returned to Bray where he's taken over The Crown on the same village High Street as The Fat Duck, remembers his exchanges with Heston fondly, commenting on his "excitable aura".

He added: "With his thick ginger hair styled in a slightly overgrown crew cut, and his friendly face adorned with freckles and a hint of stubble, the chef patron was as approachable as he was passionate about the craft of cooking"

His attire also made a lasting impression: "Unlike most chefs up until that point who wore traditional blue check trousers and clogs, he donned a Bragard 'Madrid' Style chef jacket with long sleeves, that he wore long. The jacket, made from the finest Egyptian cotton was filthy, stained from his relentless work in the kitchen.

"It was kind of testament to his dedication that it was paired with black joggers from NEXT and black oil-soaked Timberland boots, completing a lasting impression mirroring his passion for his craft."



SET
LUNCH MENU

Salad frisee with poached egg and bacon lardons

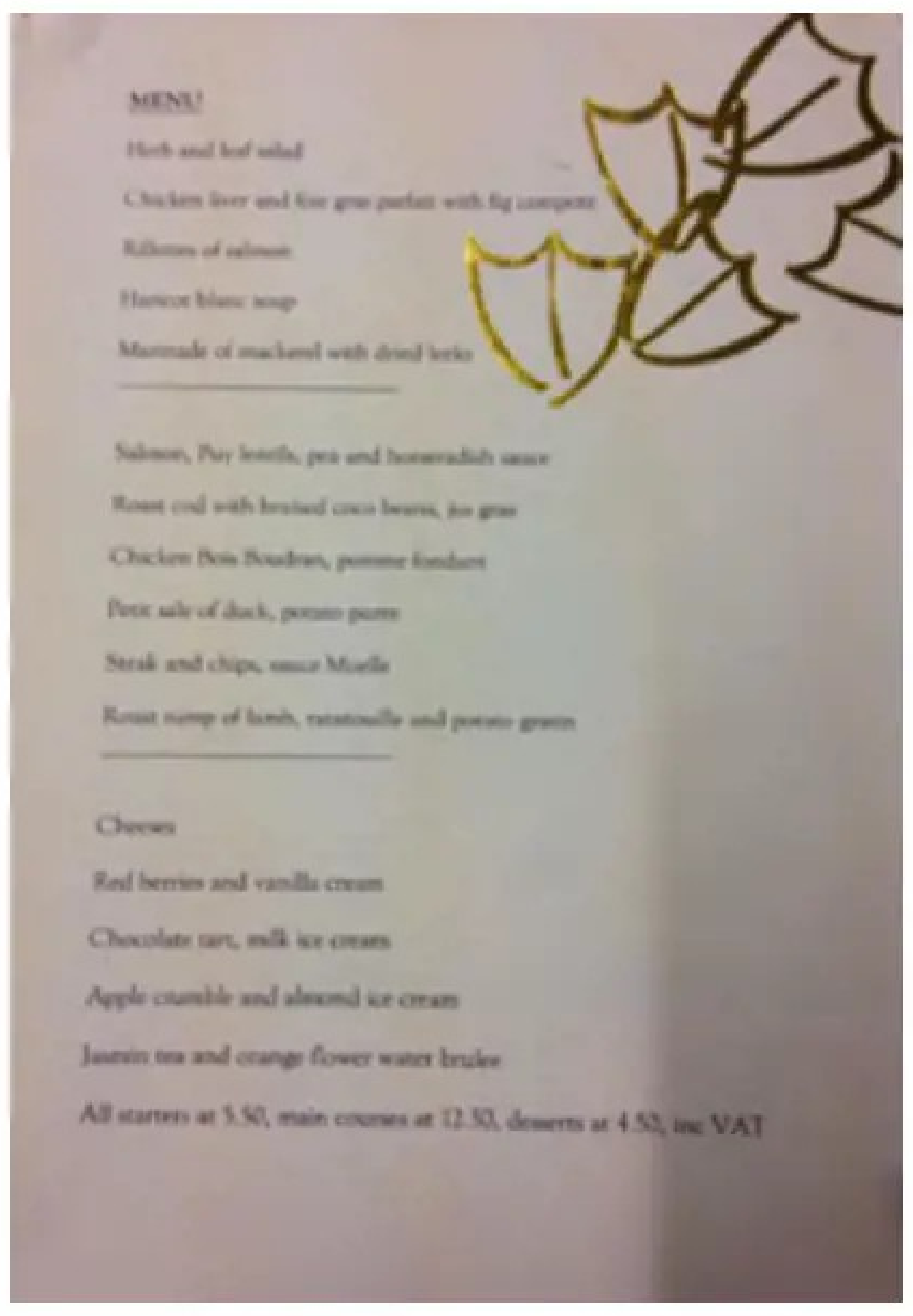
Smoked haddock, new potatoes and mustard Beurre Blanc

Poached saucisson, caramelised onions and pomme purée

Jasmin tea and orange flower water brulee

Cheese

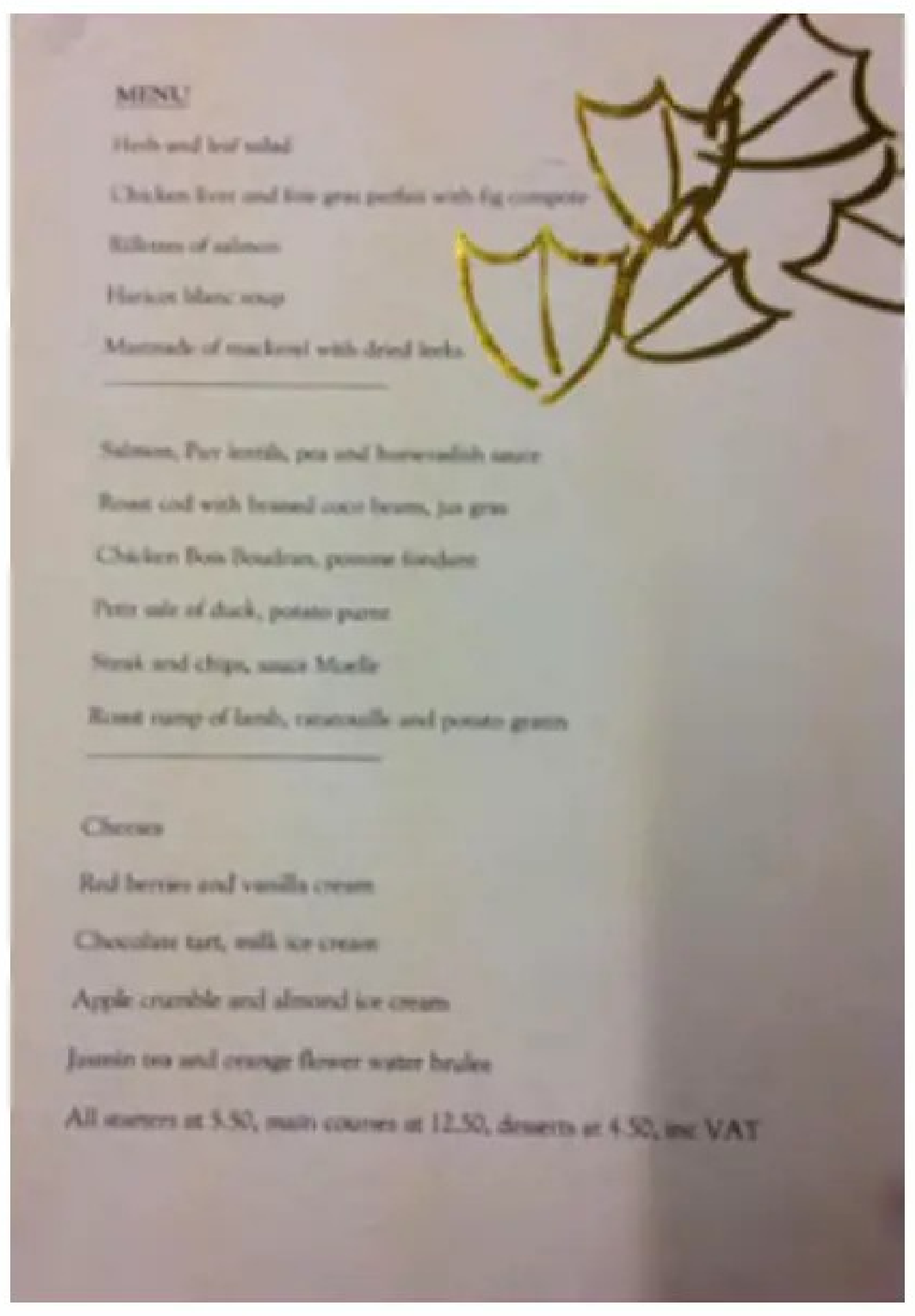
2 courses at 13.50, 3 courses at 17.00 including coffee and V.A.T.



MENU
Herb and leaf salad
Chicken liver and foie gras parfait with fig compote
Rillettes of salmon
Haricot blanc soup
Marinade of mackerel with dried leeks

Salmon, Puy lentils, pea and horseradish sauce
Roast cod with braised coco beans, jus gras
Chicken Bois Boudran, pomme fondant
Petit salé of duck, potato purée
Steak and chips, sauce Moelle
Roast rump of lamb, ratatouille and potato gratin

Cheeses
Red berries and vanilla cream
Chocolate tart, milk ice cream
Apple crumble and almond ice cream
Jasmin tea and orange flower water brulee
All starters at 5.50, main courses at 12.50, desserts at 4.50, inc VAT



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At that time, The Fat Duck was serving simple French food akin to what you'd find in any quality Parisian side street bistro. A look back from the menus of 1995 shows a lunch set menu priced at £17 comprising salad frisee with poached egg and bacon lardons; poached saucisson, caramelised onions and pomme puree; Jasmin tea and orange flower water brulee, followed by cheese.

And although it became a diner of note, it was another four years before The Fat Duck gained its first Michelin star, and further five until it reached its three star status.

However, Simon remembers that even in 1995, long before the accolades, Heston was, conjuring up adventurous flavours, pushing culinary boundaries.

During one particularly memorable conversation, Simon said: "We discussed the peculiar phenomenon of certain food altering the scent of our wee. The chef patron shared his belief that asparagus when eaten caused a distinct aroma of asparagus in his wee, while I argued that on eating asparagus it reminded me that my wee had the aroma of cooked burgers. Our conversation veered towards the art of cooking asparagus to perfection, as well as the culinary magic of green beans that required a delicate balance of overcooking and then rehydration in Lescure butter, a favoured ingredient sourced from Cuttys at the time, which is now obtainable everywhere."

On another occasion, Simon said: "One day, on a second's break, he (Heston) came into his restaurant via the front door as there was no back door, raving about how he had just eaten pizza and garlic bread, followed by five strong espressos. The aftertaste had left him thinking 'savoury duck' and he was quickly pureeing confit garlic and adding coffee granules to see the results."

He added: "The point is, my old chef-patron truly is a genius in the culinary world and, to top it off, one of the most affable men you could ever hope or wish to meet."

Read more of Simon's time at The Fat Duck in his book Cooking, Art & Schizzle available at **https://www.awaywithmedia.com/buy-books/food/simon-bonwick**

Cook!

> “HAVING A KITCHEN LIKE THIS AROUND YOU, I FEEL THAT IT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT TO BE FAR MORE CREATIVE”

OLLIE BRIDGWATER, THE GILPIN

THE KITCHEN IS NOT JUST A WORKSPACE. IT IS THE BEATING HEART OF YOUR RESTAURANT - THE STAGE ON WHICH YOUR CRAFT, CREATIVITY, AND TEAM COME TOGETHER IN THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF PERFECTION. EVERY DETAIL MATTERS: THE FLOW BETWEEN SECTIONS, THE DURABILITY OF THE EQUIPMENT, THE EFFICIENCY OF MOVEMENT IN SERVICE.

This is precisely where Qook!, the Dutch kitchen manufacturer, has built its reputation: designing and delivering kitchens that are as functional as they are inspirational and beautiful.

Qook! approaches the professional kitchen as both a science and an art. Their ethos is simple: a kitchen must serve the chef, not the other way around. Working closely with chefs and restaurateurs, the company engineers bespoke solutions that reflect the unique rhythm of each brigade. Whether it's optimising line of sight in an open kitchen, ensuring precise ergonomic positioning of equipment, or integrating the latest technology seamlessly into the workflow, Qook! understands that even the smallest design detail can influence consistency, speed, and ultimately guest experience.

Durability is central to Qook!'s approach. Michelin-starred kitchens can be punishing environments - intense heat, constant use, and uncompromising standards of cleanliness. Qook! builds with materials and systems designed to withstand this pressure day after day, year after year. Surfaces are robust yet elegant; fixtures are engineered to maintain peak performance under the heaviest of workloads. Their kitchens are not just built to last—they are built to evolve alongside your cooking.

Innovation, too, is key. Qook! embraces new technologies without losing sight of tradition. From energy-efficient systems that reduce environmental impact, to designs that give chefs flexibility to expand or adapt, every project is tailored to future-proof the kitchen. For chefs leading in sustainability, Qook! provides solutions that support greener operations without compromising performance.

Qook! Is all about a collaborative process. These are not "off the shelf" kitchens. Each project begins with listening - understanding the chef's philosophy, the restaurant's identity, and the operational realities of the space. From there, Qook! crafts a kitchen that becomes an extension of the chef's mind and body: intuitive, efficient, and beautiful.

+ **QOOK!** CHEF TRIP WITH:

PAUL FOSTER – CONTENT CREATOR
OLLIE BRIDGWATER – THE GILPIN
MARK KEMPSON – KITCHEN W8
ALLISTER BARSBY – HIDE AND FOX
JAMES LORD – OPHEEM
TONY PARKIN – CONSULTANT CHEF

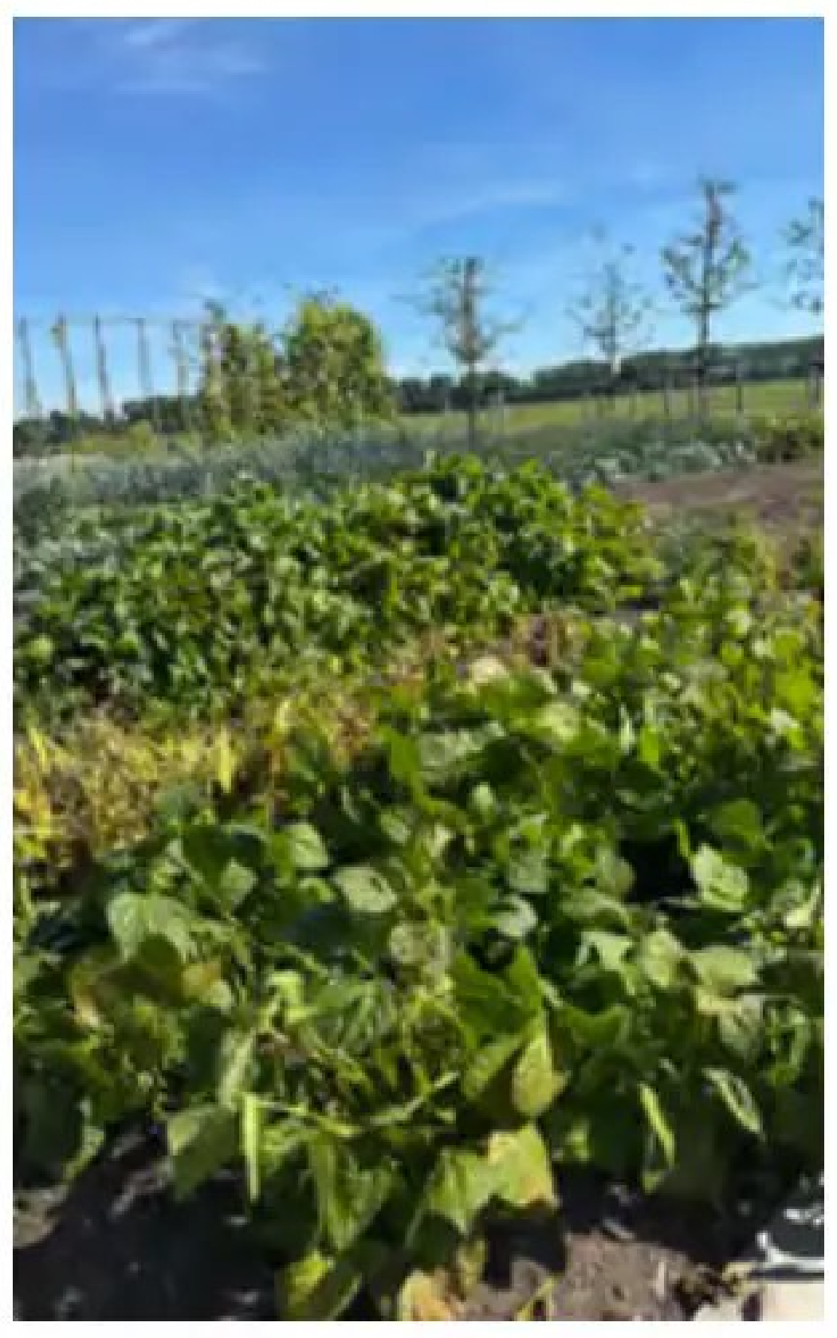
DAY ONE

FIRST STOP
- OVER-AMSTEL BOERDERIJ

Just a short drive south of Amsterdam, Ouderkerk aan de Amstel is a village that feels worlds away from the bustle of the capital. Straddling the banks of the River Amstel, it is a place where water, history, and hospitality meet. The river itself, once the lifeline of Amsterdam, defines the rhythm of the town. On a sunny Sunday morning, joggers, dog walkers and families take to the banks of the river to breathe in some early morning air.

Over-Amstel Boerderij is a farmhouse restaurant created by South African couple Karen Roos and Koos Bekker. In recent years the couple have become renowned for transforming historic estates into extraordinary destinations.

Their first project, Babylonstoren in the Franschhoek wine valley, opened in 2010 and quickly became one of South Africa's most celebrated farm hotels. This was followed in 2019 by The Newt in Somerset, a working estate that has redefined the concept of a country hotel in the UK. In just six years, The Newt has grown into a cultural phenomenon: its gardens now welcome more than 250,000 visitors annually, it has won multiple awards, and it remains one of the most sought-after stays in the country.



Pain de Campagne €6.50
Duivendrecht €6.50

With Over-Amstel Boerderij, the couple bring the same philosophy to the Netherlands, combining hospitality, agriculture, and design in a way that celebrates both place and produce. Their kitchen gardens are just simply incredible, producing vast quantities of fruit, vegetables and herbs that are the basis of the menus served in their restaurant, and widely used to create products for their farm shop. Beetroot air freshener, anyone? Surplus is even turned into household products and, the above-mentioned room spray is surprisingly rather nice.

With its own kitchen gardens, sheep, cows and pigs, onsite dairy, bakery and farm shop - not forgetting two bespoke Qook! kitchens – the estate is every inch as beautiful as it looks. Serving large numbers of diners from their open kitchen, functionality and performance must go hand in hand with aesthetics and Qook! nailed the brief. They have also installed a development and prep kitchen in a closed environment. This has been designed to withstand the demands of a busy farm-to-table enterprise while also remaining a key piece of the businesses design ethos.

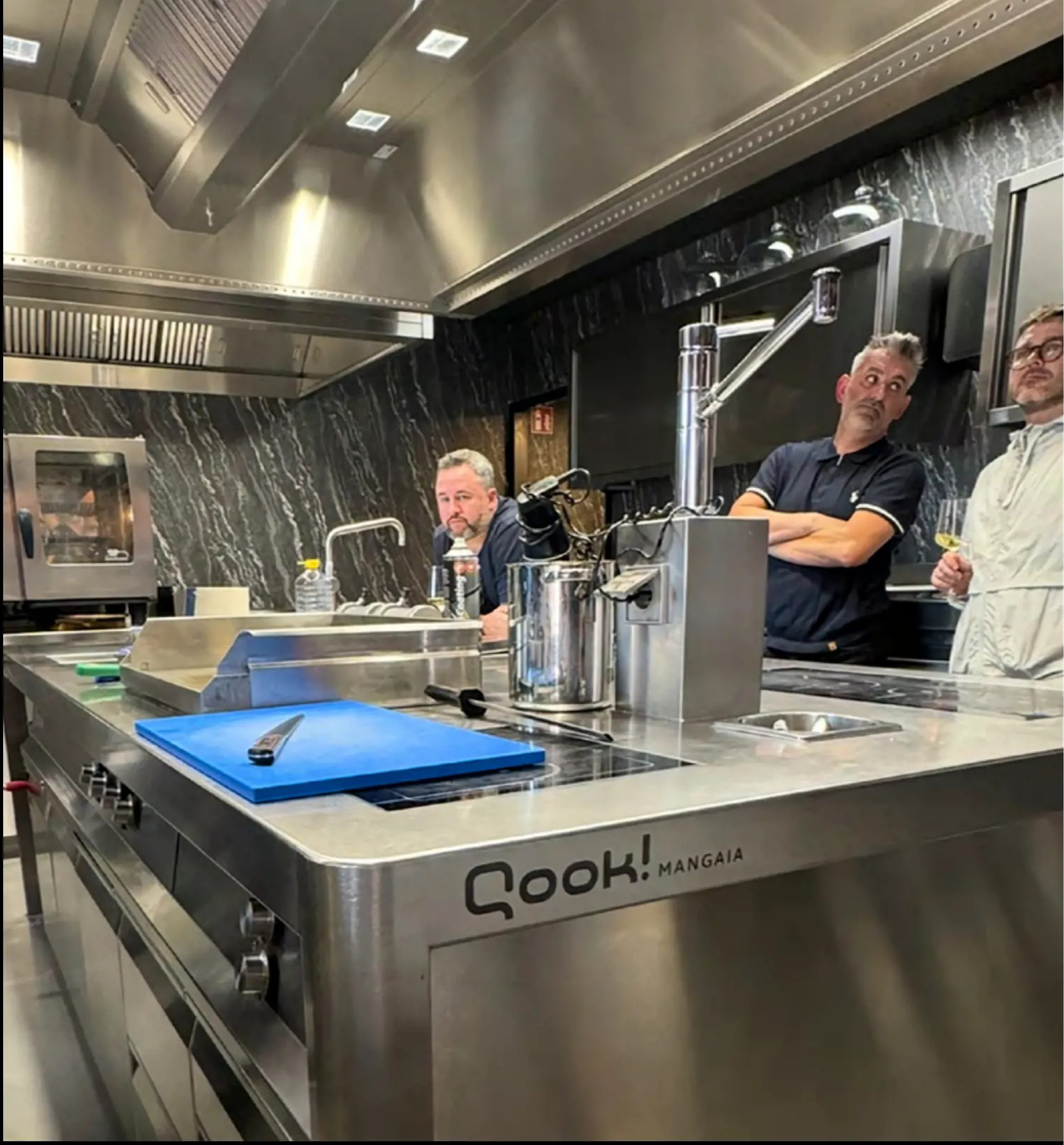
SECOND STOP — CALVA, NOOTDORP

"My Qook! Kitchen was so perfectly designed for my style of cuisine, that when I relocated to another site the Qook! team came, removed, then reinstalled my kitchen into its new home."

Tucked away on the Markt in the heart of Nootdorp, Restaurant Calva offers an intimate fine-dining experience where craftsmanship and creativity take centre stage. The name "Calva" is inspired by the Latin word for nut — a playful nod to Nootdorp ("noot" meaning nut in Dutch) — and reflects the restaurant's philosophy of combining authenticity with refinement.

Led by owner and chef Tom Beckers – a chef who has spent time working at the UK, most notably at the Vineyard at Stockcross – Calva has built a reputation for delivering modern French cuisine with a personal touch. Relocated over the past year to a new home, such was the success of the Qook! suite with an Adieu grill installed, Tom was reluctant to let it go. The Qook! team was quick to respond, bringing in engineers and specialists to ensure the removal, transportation and reinstallation were seamless. This important piece of information did not go unnoticed. In days gone by, an investment such as a cooking suite into a professional kitchen meant that it would be left in situ should you decide to relocate. Qook! have disrupted this notion.

Tom's kitchen works almost exclusively with seasonal ingredients, ensuring the menu evolves throughout the year and the restaurant is beautifully designed wood, art from local craftspeople and a stunning hidden private dining room that is housed in the cellar. Guests are invited to discover "De Belevenis" - a surprise menu that highlights bold flavour combinations, delicate presentation, and refined techniques. Signature dishes, such as the deeply aromatic shellfish bisque, showcase Tom's skill for balancing comfort with sophistication. As we congregated around the open kitchen, Tom cooked us an amazing tasting menu, shared stories of his time in the UK, explained why he was so keen to keep his kitchen when he moved and told us of his ambitions for the future.



RESTAURANT CALVA

THIRD STOP – WE DRIVE TO BELGIUM

Pillows Boutique Hotel Reylof, Ghent

We arrived in Ghent, Belgium, at the elegant Pillows Boutique Hotel Reylof. This historic hotel blends timeless charm with contemporary luxury. Since 2021, the culinary team has been working in two fully tailor-made Qook! kitchens designed for refinement and efficiency.

Housed in the former mansion of Baron Reylof, the building has been reimagined as a boutique hotel where history and modern design flow seamlessly together.

The hotel's interiors celebrate classic style with a modern twist: soaring ceilings, ornate fireplaces, and period details are softened by a serene palette of warm neutrals and rich textures. Each of the 156 rooms and suites is designed as a sanctuary, with many rooms opening onto balconies or terraces overlooking the tranquil courtyard or city rooftops.

A large, busy hotel demands kitchens that are fit for purpose, and this is where Qook! have delivered again. The vast kitchens are open, and guests are regular passers-by, all keen to watch the teams in action. The kitchens form part of the overall design aesthetic and polished steel is complemented by rows of polished copper pans. As we take in tours of both kitchens, the team remark on not only the performance capabilities, but also the ease of maintenance and cleaning. LOF Restaurant presents refined Flemish cuisine with international flair, while Olivier Le Petit Bistro provides a more relaxed, brasserie-style option and it was the former that delivered an exceptional five course tasting menu in their private room to welcome us.

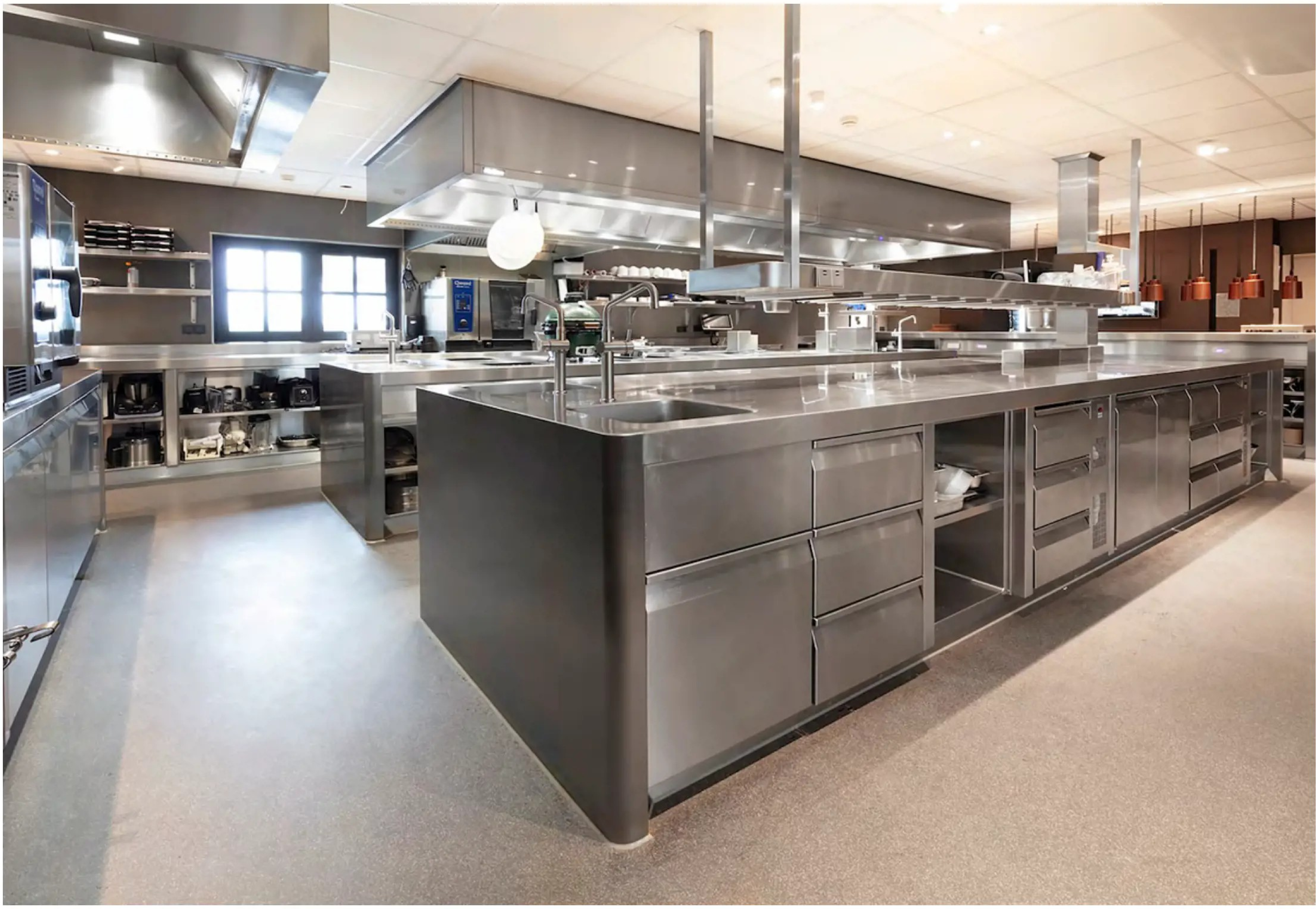
DAY TWO

FIRST STOP
– INTER SCALDES

This could be the most beautiful professional kitchen in the world.

In the heart of Kruiningen, Inter Scaldes reveals a kitchen designed as meticulously as its cuisine. Under the leadership of chef-owner duo Jeroen and Sanne Achtien, Inter Scaldes blends its illustrious past with energy and vision. Recognised with two Michelin stars in the 2024 Netherlands Guide, Inter Scaldes remains one of the country's most acclaimed dining destinations. A restaurant where tradition and innovation meet – and where every detail, from the first welcome to the final bite, is designed to leave a lasting impression.

INTER - SCALDES



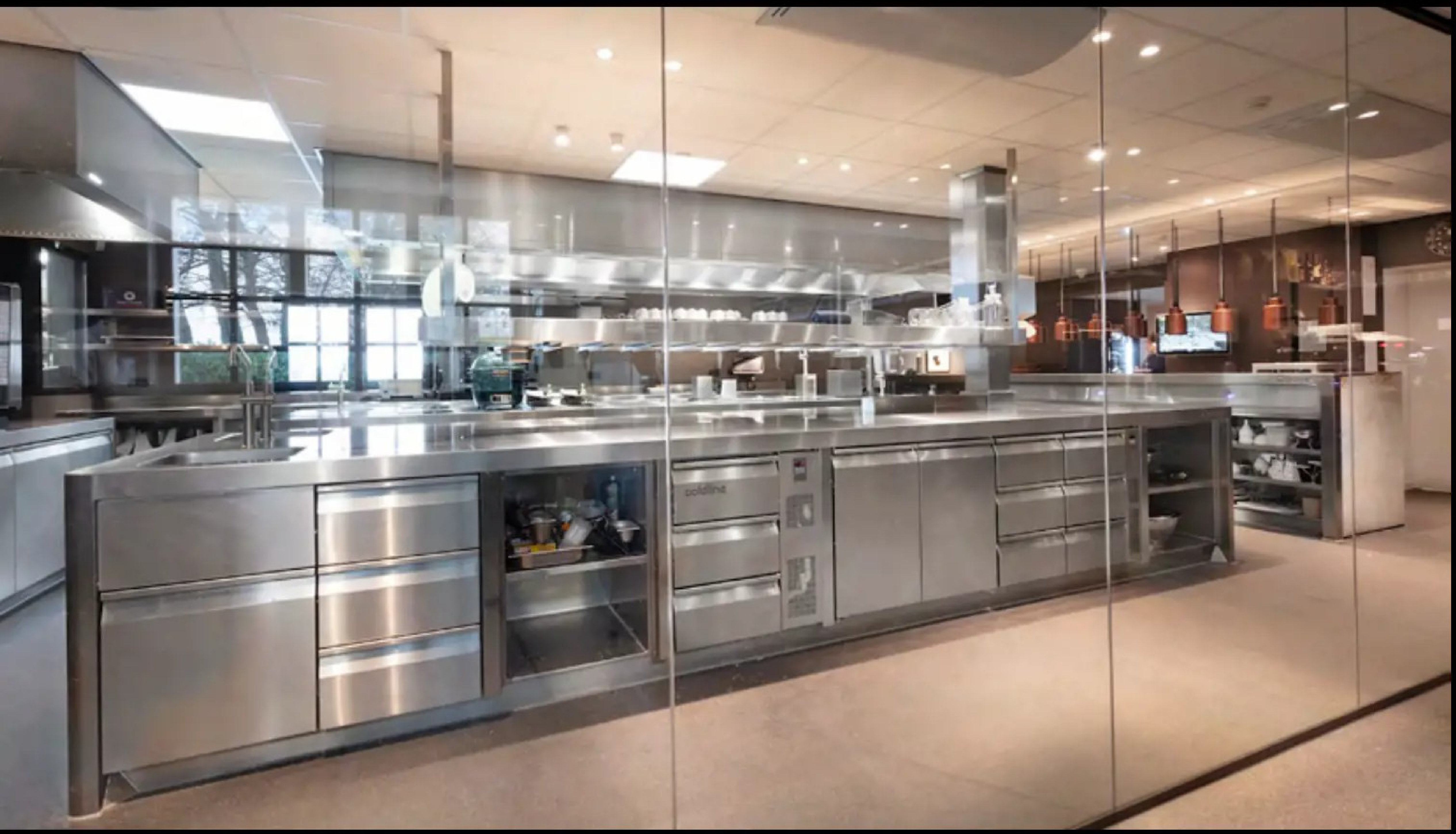
Created in 2023, in collaboration with Qook!, the culinary workspaces embody refinement and functionality, setting a new benchmark for professional kitchens.

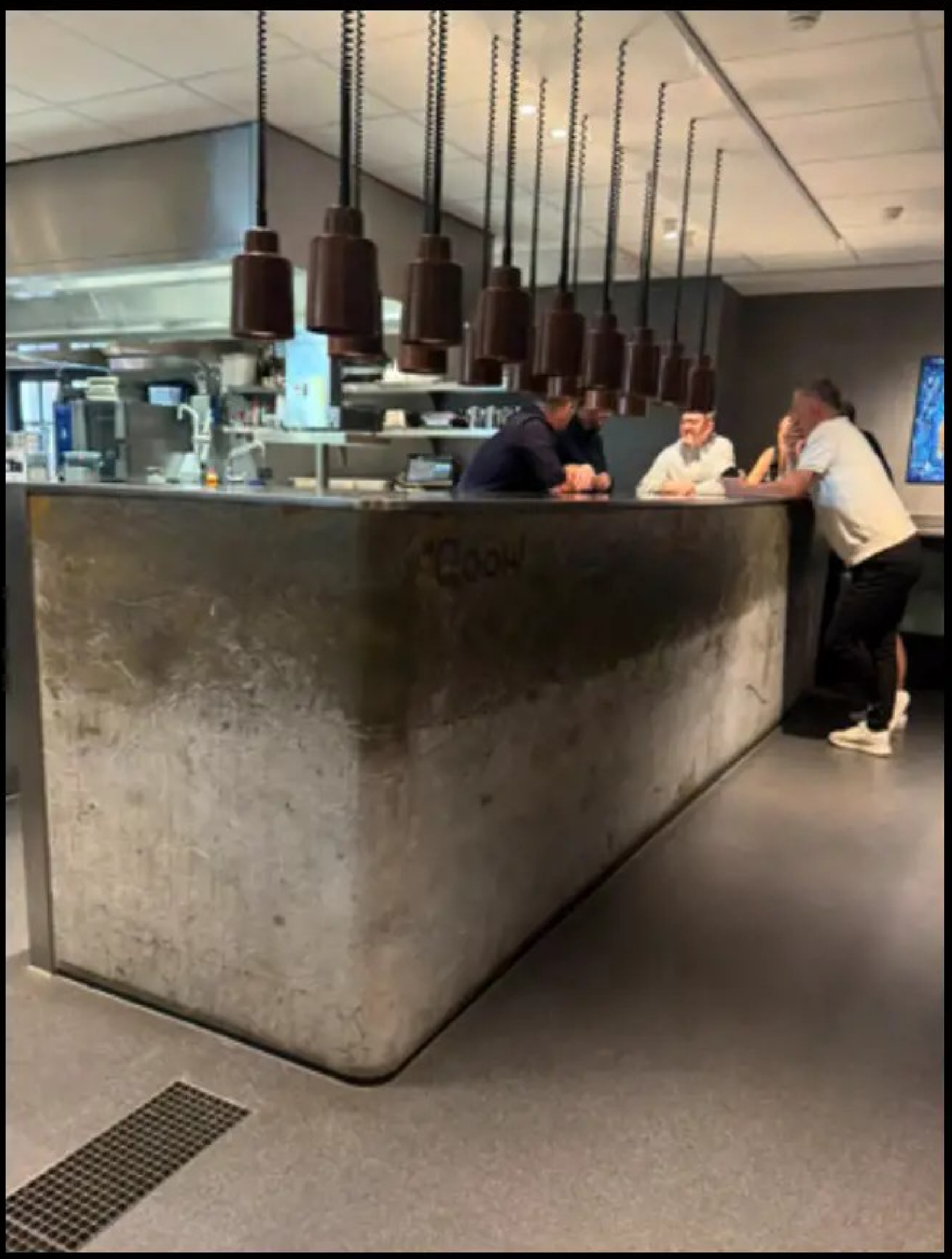
At the centre is an elegant pass finished with a distinctive natural stone, chosen not only for its visual impact but also for its durability in an ambitious and dynamic environment. The pastry section is equally impressive: equipped with advanced cooling systems, it reflects an attention to detail that ensures chefs can work with precision and consistency.

The main kitchen is a study in thoughtful design. Expansive worktops provide ample space for creativity, while induction tops streamline the workflow with speed, energy efficiency, and control. Every element, from layout to materials, has been considered to support the rhythm of a high-performance Michelin-level brigade.

salva
modular

INTER
CALDES





Innovation is woven into the finer details, too. A heated dispensing card - engineered to warm plates gently from below - ensures dishes maintain their perfect temperature as they move from kitchen to dining room. This balance of cutting-edge technology and subtle convenience underscores Qook!'s philosophy: to craft kitchens that are as inspiring as they are functional, built to meet the exacting demands of modern gastronomy. Even the kitchen porter section, separated from the main kitchen by floor to ceiling glass panels, is like a show piece.

The philosophy of the cuisine is deeply rooted in the bounty of the region. Zeeland's coastline and farmland supply much of what appears on the plate - from North Sea fish and oysters to seasonal vegetables and foraged herbs. Jeroen Achtien brings his own signature to the menu, weaving in modern techniques and a particular passion for fermentation. Each multi-course tasting experience is designed to surprise, with dishes that balance purity of flavour, creativity, and a sense of place.

"With Qook!'s expertise, every aspect of our kitchen has been meticulously crafted to not only be practical but also aesthetically pleasing. From the layout to the state-of-the-art technology, every element is designed to enhance the culinary journey for our guests."

SECOND STOP
– QBTEC, HOME OF QOOK!

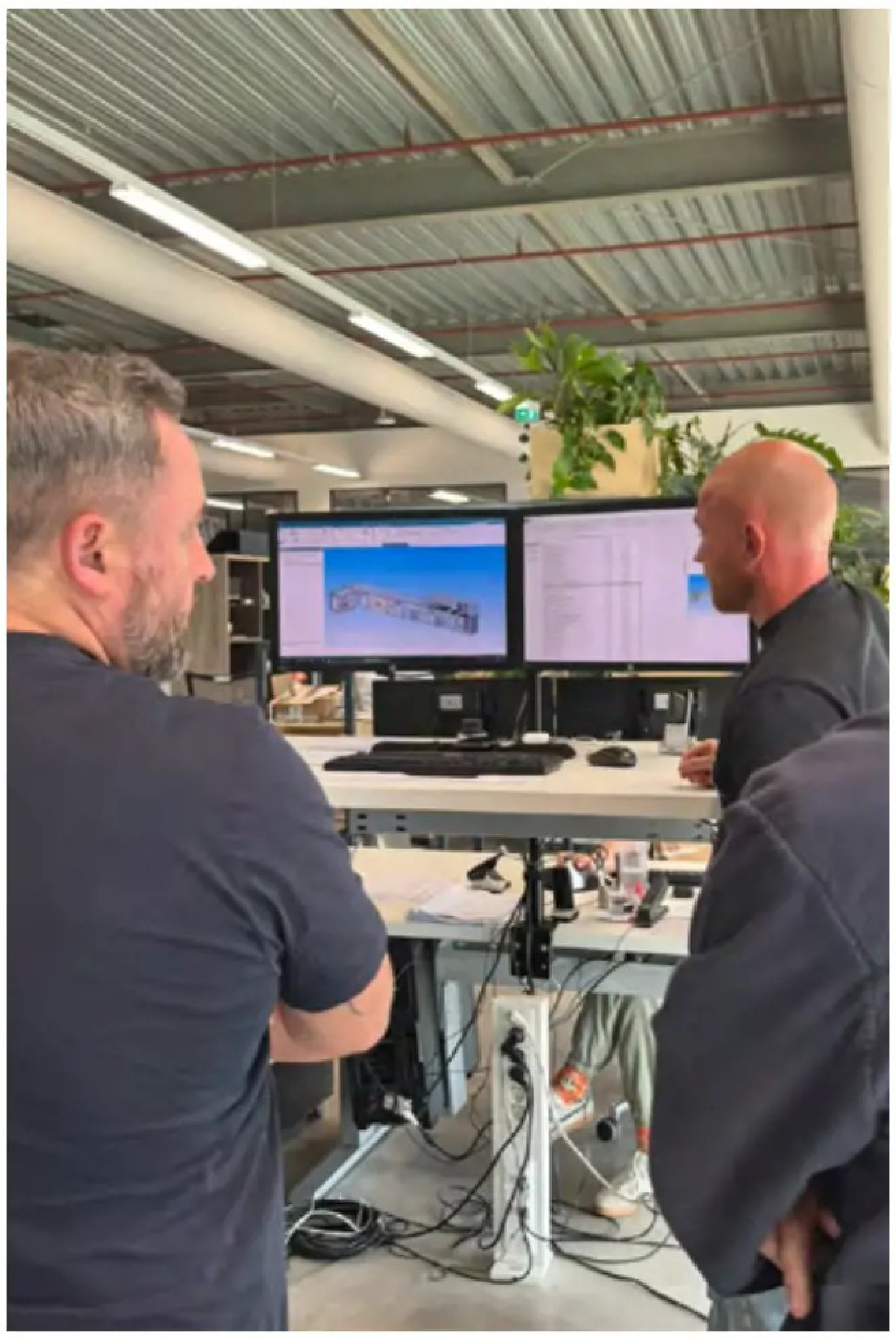
Redefining Professional Kitchens QBTEC: Crafting the Future of Professional Kitchens

QB
The frying and cooking eq

The story of Qook! begins with QBTEC. In the world of professional culinary equipment, few names carry the legacy and innovation of QBTEC. The company traces its roots back to 1944, when Quirinus Bakker, originally a coachbuilder, began experimenting with frying equipment. By 1953, the first commercial fryer under the Perfecta name was born, setting the stage for decades of innovation in technology. From those early beginnings, QBTEC grew into a versatile powerhouse, bridging the gap between traditional craftsmanship and modern industrial production.

The company's growth has been marked by strategic expansions and acquisitions. In 1965, the Kiremko brand emerged, while later acquisitions such as Smitto Apparatenfabriek broadened the product range to include specialised equipment for fish fry operations. Over time, these brands were unified under the QBTEC umbrella, consolidating decades of expertise in one state-of-the-art facility.

Today, QBTEC's headquarters and main production site in Woerden, Netherlands, are the beating heart of the company.



Here, a team of engineers, welders, and technicians combine advanced technology with meticulous attention to detail. Robotic welding, automated bending machines, and cutting-edge R&D labs allow QBTEC to craft everything from fryers and griddles to fully bespoke kitchens. Each piece is designed to meet the exacting standards of modern gastronomy, where efficiency, durability, and design excellence must coexist.

QBTEC's constant research and development of new products to meet the demands of an ever-changing market has allowed for tremendous growth. The relocation in 2009 to their state-of-the-art premises in Woerden, Holland, houses over 10000 square metres of production space, purchasing more than 600 tonnes of stainless steel annually.

At the top of the family of brands sits Qook!, QBTEC's premium label. Launched to push the boundaries of what a professional kitchen can be, Qook! represents the ultimate blend of craftsmanship, innovation, and design. Where QBTEC is synonymous with reliability and scale, Qook! adds an extra layer of refinement - kitchens that are not only efficient to work in but also visually striking, built to match the prestige of high-end restaurants and culinary institutions. The brand works closely with chefs, architects, and designers to tailor kitchens that reflect the personality and ambitions of each establishment. In doing so, Qook! has become the partner of choice for some of the most acclaimed Michelin starred restaurants in Europe.

Innovation remains central to QBTEC's philosophy. The company continues to push the boundaries of what a professional kitchen can achieve. Every surface, every appliance, and every workflow is considered, ensuring chefs have the tools they need to perform at the highest level.

From a small workshop in the mid-20th century to a leading European manufacturer of professional kitchen solutions, QBTEC stands as a testament to visionary engineering and enduring craftsmanship. Qook! installations are shaping the kitchens where culinary excellence comes to life. And today, that expertise has come across the channel to the UK for the first time…

QOOK! BY KFE

The UK distribution of Qook! is managed exclusively by KFE, a Peterborough-based company with a long history of supplying high-quality catering and kitchen solutions to the hospitality sector. Founded in 1996, the family-owned business, KFE, has built a reputation for delivering innovative equipment and tailored service, supporting both restaurants and institutional kitchens across the UK. Their expertise in installation, aftercare, and consultation ensures that every kitchen project runs smoothly from design through to operation.

Founded in 1996 by MD Paul Williams, in a bedroom above his family's fish and chip shop, KFE remains a family business to this day. The Williams family's hands-on involvement in KFE underscores the company's commitment to maintaining a strong, family-oriented ethos while delivering exceptional service. This service stretches from initial consultations and site visits through to concept design & drawings, production of 3D 'walkthrough' of the proposed design, visit to view the manufacturing of your kitchen, installation and post-installation training and support.

The partnership between Qook! and KFE brings together QBTEC's world-class manufacturing capabilities and KFE's deep knowledge of the UK hospitality market. Through this collaboration, UK chefs gain direct access to Qook!'s cutting-edge kitchen solutions while benefiting from KFE's guidance on design, workflow optimisation, and installation. The synergy allows restaurants to create spaces that are not only technically advanced but also inspiring and functional, reflecting the brand's commitment to culinary excellence.

For more information on Qook! by KFE or to book a consultation – contact Nikki Williams, Sales Director, on:
nikki.williams@kfeltd.co.uk
01778 380448

SHETLAND AND ORKNEY

BOUNTY

OF THE NORTHERN ISLES

CY 807
CY 807

WHERE THE NORTH SEA MEETS THE ATLANTIC, THE NORTHERN ISLES OF SCOTLAND OFFER A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF LOW-INTERVENTION HARVESTING AND EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY.

The remote archipelagos of Shetland and Orkney are not only steeped in a rich cultural history, but renowned for crystal-clear waters home to some of the world's finest seafood.

Karl Simpson, director of Simpson Fish in Shetland notes the islands are "placed smack in the middle of some of the richest fishing grounds in Europe. This facilitates shorter trips for the local fishing vessels which operate from the Islands. Shorter trips mean fresher fish which reach the marketplace in good time and optimum condition."

Orkney Crab adds, "Strong Atlantic tides from the west powerfully meet the North Sea currents on the east. These cold, pristine and fast-flowing waters, which help reduce pollutants, are rich with nutrients and provide an ideal environment for a diverse range of species, particularly shellfish, to thrive which results in a much superior flavour and texture."

Sustainability and tradition lie at the heart of the Northern Isles' fishing practices, with many businesses remaining in the same families for generations. Shetlanders and Orcadians alike strive to protect marine resources for future generations while modernising techniques to improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact.

Orkney Crab notes, "There is a respect for this special environment and the produce it harvests that has helped feed and nourish Orcadians for centuries. Local fishermen use small-scale, traditional, and sustainable catch methods, enabling full traceability from sea to shore."

Meanwhile, in Shetland, a number of small commercial fishers still use traditional line fishing to catch species which are in abundance closer to shore.

"Line fishing is a historic means of fish catching in Shetland, but the method of operating the line has modernised," explains Simpson. "The line is operated by an electrical jigging machine."

But in many ways, the local seafood species themselves contribute to the sector's sustainability: Shetland produces the majority of the UK's mussels. These shellfish are one of the most environmentally friendly sources of protein; they have the lowest carbon footprint of any other farmed protein in the UK. In fact, mussels and other shellfish abundant in the region, such as scallops, help to improve the marine environment by acting as water filters.

In the 1960s, commercial fishing for markets beyond the islands began to take hold in the local economy, and its importance has only grown since then: despite representing less than 1% of Scotland's population, the islands are home to 13% of the national fishing fleet.

But shellfish has formed part of Shetland and Orcadian diets for thousands of years, and the islanders' maritime heritage remains central to life today. In these communities, seafood is more than just an industry. It is part of their cultural identity.

QUICK FACTS: SHETLAND

KEY SPECIES: MUSSELS, LOBSTER, SCALLOPS, SALMON, MACKEREL, COD, MONKFISH

- SHETLAND MAKES UP 13% OF THE SCOTTISH COASTLINE
- MORE THAN 80% OF ALL SCOTTISH MUSSELS ARE GROWN IN SHETLAND
- SHETLAND IS THE SECOND LARGEST PORT IN THE UK FOR LANDINGS OF SEAFOOD (BEHIND PETERHEAD)

QUICK FACTS: ORKNEY

KEY SPECIES: SCALLOPS, BROWN CRAB, SALMON, HADDOCK, COD, MACKEREL, HERRING

- ORKNEY MAKES UP 5% OF THE SCOTTISH COASTLINE
- AT 125 SQUARE MILES, SCAPA FLOW IS THE LARGEST NATURAL HARBOUR IN EUROPE (AND THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE WORLD)
- ORKNEY IS HOME TO THE LARGEST CRAB PROCESSING PLANT IN EUROPE

DID YOU KNOW?

THE ATLANTIC WOLFISH IS OFTEN NICKNAMED 'CATFISH' BY THE FISHING COMMUNITIES IN SHETLAND AND ORKNEY. HOWEVER, IT IS DISTINCT FROM THE SPECIES COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS CATFISH WHICH IS USUALLY FOUND IN TROPICAL WATERS.

BEYOND SHELLFISH

While, for many people, Shetland and Orkney are synonymous with mussels, scallops and crab, the clear waters of the island are home to far more than these delicious species.

There are other types of shellfish, such as whelks, known in Orkney as 'buckies'. They're particularly popular in Asian markets, but their sweet, saline flavour could do well domestically. Consider boiling them, grilling or deep-frying quickly to avoid overcooking.

Another lesser-known species missing its rightful place in the culinary spotlight is the Atlantic wolffish – also known as 'Scotch halibut' and 'Scarborough woof'. This fish primarily feeds on lobster, crab, and other shellfish, which strongly influences its flavour. But what truly sets this fish apart is its texture, which walks the perfect line between dense and delicate – it stands up to nearly any cooking technique, from roasting and frying, to grilling, poaching or steaming.

And of course, the North Atlantic seas are home to some of Scotland's most beloved species: salmon, mackerel and a range of whitefish including cod and haddock.

> *We visited Orkney and Shetland last year, and it was truly awe-inspiring; it was like a portal to another time, when the sea was the lifeblood of the community. In many ways, it still is: the islands have the largest share of employment in fishing in Scotland per capita.*

> *Over the course of the week, we met with a wide range of people including shellfish farmers, processors and smokehouse operators, as well as learning how UHI Shetland's Centre for Sustainable Seafood collaborates with industry to drive progress around sustainability and innovation across the sector. It was an altogether exciting and fascinating experience, letting us get up close with the people keeping the Scottish seafood sector alive in these isles.*

> *"Ensuring sustainability throughout the Scottish seafood sector is a key part of our work. The trip gave us valuable insight into how we can support the long-term resilience of Scotland's seafood industry, particularly in these remote island communities."*
>
> **- Adam Wing, Head of Trade Marketing for the UK, Middle East and Asia, Seafood Scotland**

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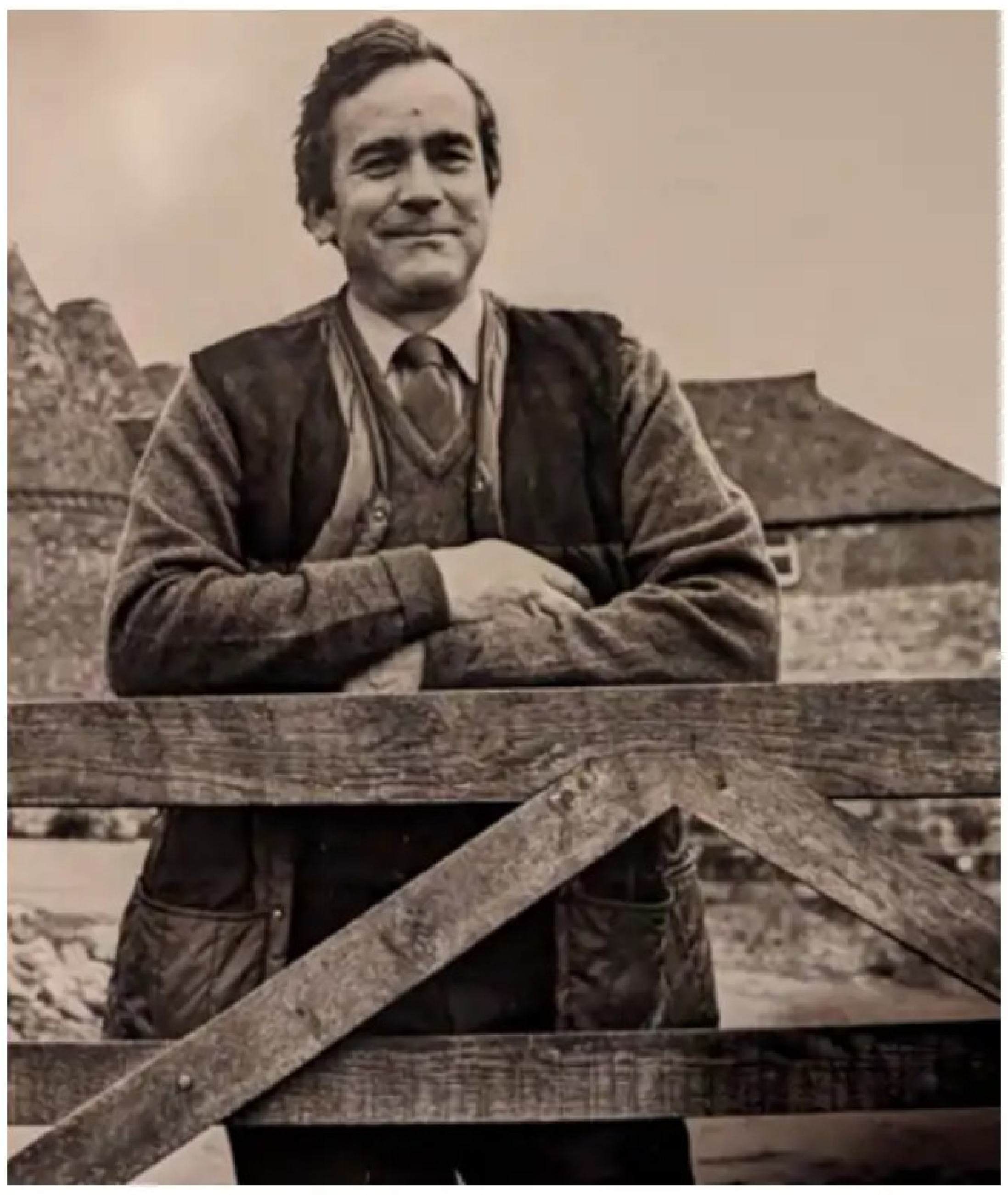
ROUGHWAY FARM: Nurturing Tradition and Innovation in the Kentish Countryside

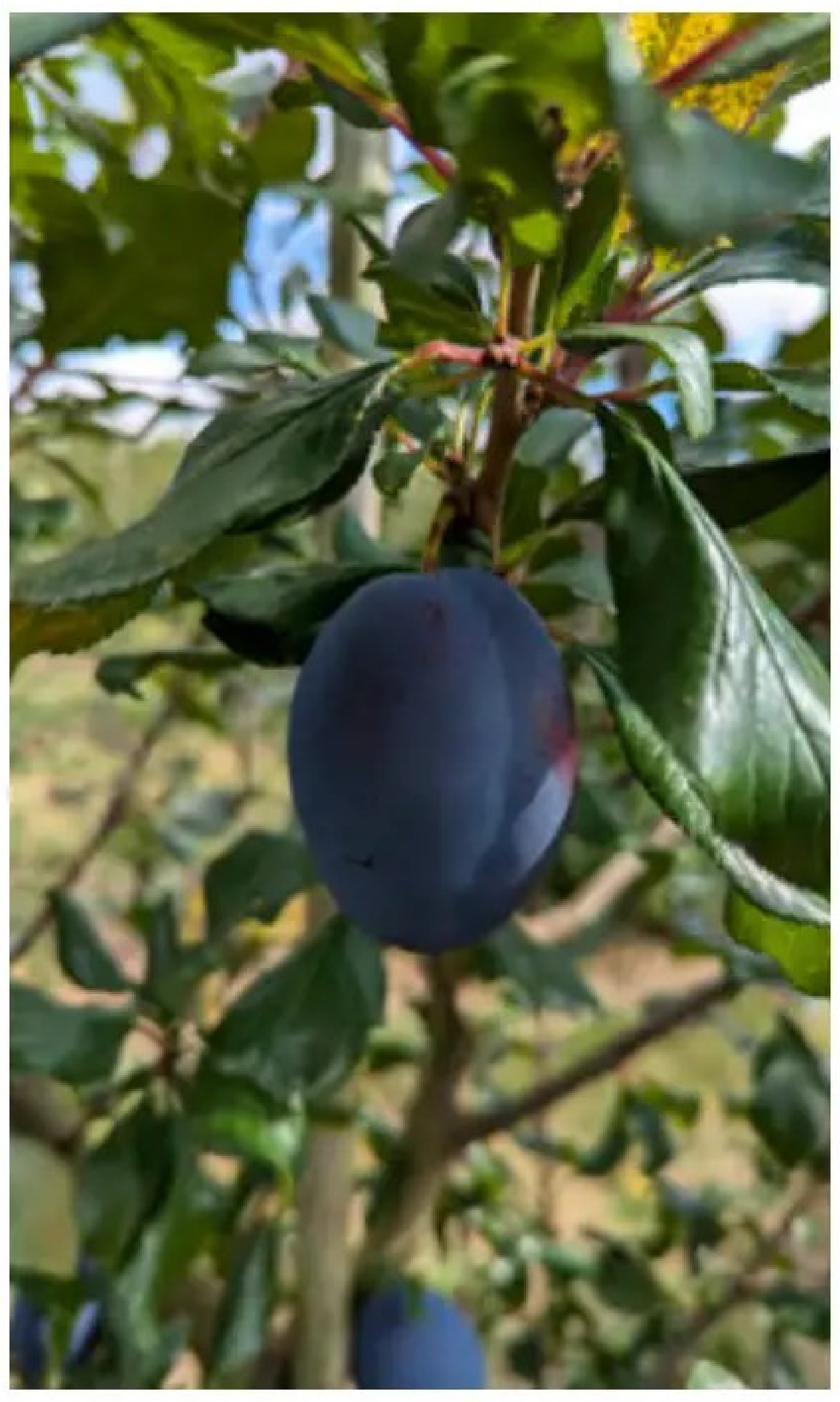
ROUGHWAY FARM

TUCKED AWAY IN THE ROLLING HILLS OF KENT, ROUGHWAY FARM IS MORE THAN A PLACE WHERE FRUIT AND NUTS ARE GROWN; IT IS THE STORY OF A FAMILY WHOSE ROOTS RUN AS DEEP AS THE ORCHARDS THEY TEND.



For over half a century, the Cannon family has cultivated this corner of the countryside, weaving together the rhythms of nature, the demands of modern farming, and a steadfast commitment to quality.

The story began in the 1960s, when John Cannon established Roughway Farm with a clear vision: to grow excellent fruit and, in time, to champion the heritage of Kent's cobnuts. John became a leading figure in the Kentish Cobnuts Association, ensuring the survival and recognition of a crop once central to the county's agricultural identity. His passion for cobnuts laid the foundation for what the farm has become today—a working estate that blends heritage with progress. In 2019, John Cannon was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Years Honours for Services to the British Cobnut Industry a fine recognition for a lifetime of service to farming and the cobnut industry. He passed away in 2023, knowing the farm was run successfully by his son Giles who had grown the farm significantly during his management, and with Tom his grandson keenly involved in further growth and diversification.



Now under the stewardship of the next generation, the Cannon family's eye remains firmly on the land, ensuring the trees are nurtured and the harvests plentiful, while balancing this with sustainable practices that preserve the farm for the future.

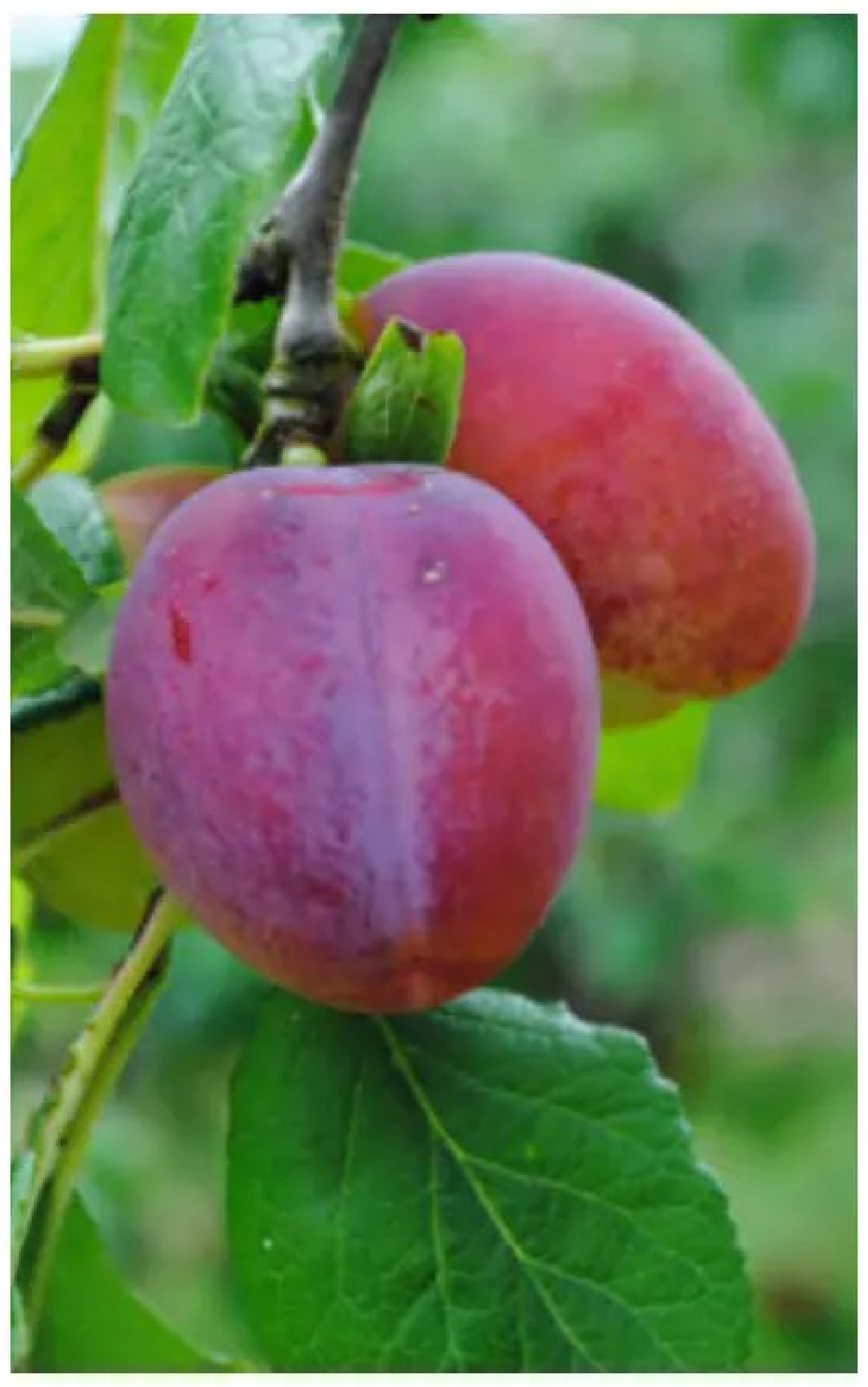
Tom Cannon has taken the family business into the digital age, spearheading Roughway Farm's online shop that now delivers cobnuts, cherries, raspberries, plums, and even fresh apple juice directly to households across the UK. He has also developed cobnut processing that provides ready cracked and roasted cobnuts to trade and individuals.

KENTISH COBNUTS
ROUGHWAY FARM

Roughway Farm remains a deeply family-centred enterprise, but it is far from insular. Their cobnuts are a testament to both tradition and innovation, and they supply everything from farmers' markets to major supermarkets. Environmental stewardship underpins their approach: hedgerows are preserved for wildlife, solar panels power cold storage, and careful water management reduces external reliance. Theirs is farming with conscience, balancing productivity with respect for the land.

MASSEY-FERGUSON

FRESH PRODUCE



It is not simply the produce but also the philosophy of the farm that makes Roughway Farm a perfect partner for Valimex. In an era when food supply chains often seem distant and faceless, the Cannons' work is rooted in authenticity and connection. Every punnet of cherries, every box of cobnuts, and every crate of apples tells the story of a family deeply intertwined with Kent's farming heritage.

Roughway Farm is building a sustainable future for British fruit and nut growing. In doing so, the Cannon family continues to prove that farming can nourish communities as much as it nurtures the land.

A SNAPSHOT OF ROUGHWAY FARM APPLE VARIETIES AVAILABLE THROUGH VALIMEX

WINDSOR

(ALSO KNOWN AS KING OF THE PIPPINS)

Origin: France, 18th century.
Appearance: Medium-sized, golden-yellow with red/orange flush and russet patches.
Flavour: Aromatic, rich, and complex with a balance of sweetness and sharp acidity.
Texture: Crisp and juicy.
Best for: Eating fresh, some cooking, and cider.

MAGIC STAR

Origin: Modern variety, developed in Switzerland, cross of Topaz.
Appearance: Bright red with yellow-green undertones.
Flavour: Sweet-tart, aromatic, slightly spicy.
Texture: Very crisp, firm, and stores exceptionally well.
Best for: Snacking, salads; maintains crunch even after storage.

GALA

Origin: New Zealand, 1930s (Kidd's Orange Red × Golden Delicious).
Appearance: Small to medium, yellow/orange with red striping.
Flavour: Mild, sweet, honey-like, low acidity.
Texture: Fine-grained, crisp but softer than newer varieties.
Best for: Eating fresh, juicing; less suited to cooking.

BRAEBURN

Origin: New Zealand, 1950s.
Appearance: Orange-red flush with green/yellow background.
Flavour: Balanced sweet-tart, complex with hints of spice/cinnamon.
Texture: Firm, crisp, very juicy.
Best for: Eating fresh, baking (holds shape), and salads.

BRAMLEY

Origin: England, early 19th century.
Appearance: Large, green, sometimes with red blush.
Flavour: Very tart when raw; becomes fluffy, juicy, and sweet when cooked.
Texture: Firm raw, breaks down to a purée when baked.
Best for: Classic English cooking apple

CAMEO

Origin: USA, discovered in Washington State in the 1980s.
Appearance: Red striped over yellow/orange skin.
Flavour: Sweet, aromatic, slightly tangy, honeyed.
Texture: Dense, very crisp, slow to brown.
Best for: Fresh eating, salads, slicing; good storage apple.

CABARET

Origin: Modern European variety (bred for flavour & storage).
Appearance: Red over yellow-green skin.
Flavour: Juicy, sweet with a refreshing tang.
Texture: Crisp and firm.
Best for: Snacking, salads; relatively new, a premium eating apple.

MAIRAC

Origin: Switzerland (cross of Fuji × Gala).
Appearance: Large, bright red, glossy.
Flavour: Very sweet, aromatic, with hints of honey and pear.
Texture: Firm, crunchy, very juicy.
Best for: Fresh eating; excellent keeping qualities.

GOLDRUSH

Origin: USA (cross of Golden Delicious × disease-resistant breeding lines).
Appearance: Golden-green skin, often with russeting.
Flavour: Very tangy at harvest, mellows to complex honey-sweet after storage.
Texture: Firm, dense, crunchy.
Best for: Eating fresh (especially after storage), cider, cooking; long-keeping variety.

COBNUTS

Cobnuts are a cultivated variety of hazelnut, distinguished by their larger size and oval shape. Though they belong to the same genus as wild hazelnuts, they are specially grown for eating fresh. The most well-known variety is the "Kentish Cobnut," which is a heritage nut traditionally grown in Kent, England.
Wild hazel bushes grow throughout most of the UK and hazelnuts were an important food in prehistoric times. Cultivated varieties of hazel have been grown in gardens and orchards since at least the 16th century. The name 'Cobnut' is thought to come from a game children played, which was an early version of 'conkers' where the winning nut was called the "cob". By the 19th century large areas of Kent were devoted to growing hazelnuts commercially, and so the name came to be Kentish Cobnuts. Today the majority are still grown in Kent, but nut orchards are also now discovered in other counties.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Harvested fresh: Cobnuts are sold and eaten fresh, unlike most hazelnuts, which are dried. The season for fresh cobnuts typically runs from mid-August to October.
Appearance: A fresh cobnut is sold with its leafy green husk still attached. As the nut matures through its short season, the husk and shell turn golden-brown.
Flavour: When young, a fresh cobnut has a "green," juicy, and subtly sweet flavour with hints of coconut or fresh peas. As the nuts mature and dry, their flavour becomes sweeter and richer.
Texture: The texture of a fresh cobnut is crunchy and creamy.
Cobnuts can be enjoyed in a variety of ways: Freshly harvested cobnuts are delicious simply cracked open and served with a sprinkle of salt. The nuts can also be roasted to enhance their sweet, nutty, and caramel-like flavours. They can be used as a substitute for hazelnuts in many recipes, savoury or sweet.

For more details contact Dan Whitmore on **sales@valimex.co.uk**

Lockhart Catering Equipment, part of the Bunzl Catering & Hospitality Division, has partnered with Hospitality Action at its upcoming exhibition,

The Catering Innovation Show

MORE THAN 30 PRIZES HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY DONATED BY SHOW EXHIBITORS, WITH ENTRANTS IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING PRIZES SUCH AS A KASAI NANO GRILL (DONATED BY GASTRONOMY PLUS), MIXER (DONATED BY ROBOT COUPE), AND RACLETTE APPLIANCE (DONATED BY LOUIS TELLIER). THERE WILL ALSO BE SEVERAL PROFESSIONAL CHEFS' KNIVES UP FOR GRABS (COURTESY OF FAGOR, VICTORINOX, REGALE, AND RATIONAL), AS WELL AS DINING SETS, COOKWARE SETS, AND VOUCHERS.

Guests can purchase raffle tickets at £10 each from Hospitality Action's booth (Stand 41) on the day of the show, or from their online ticket platform in advance, here: **Win one of a series of fabulous prizes!**

The raffle draw will take place at 4pm on the day of the show, and winners will be contacted to arrange delivery of their prize with the corresponding donor.

We’ve got you.

Hospitality Action

Mark Lombard, Managing Director at Lockhart Catering Equipment, is delighted with the prize list:
“We’re incredibly grateful to our generous exhibitors who have helped us collate such an impressive prize list to support this great cause. Hospitality Action helps thousands of hospitality professionals every year, and we’re delighted to be partnering with them at our first ever trade show.”

Mark Lewis, Chief Executive at Hospitality Action is excited about the event:
“We’re thrilled with the fantastic prizes that have been donated to our Prize Draw at The Catering Innovation Show. It’s a great opportunity for operators to compare the latest innovations, discover new industry trends, and foster professional networks. From our perspective, the show is the ideal opportunity to showcase our work to both operators and exhibitors alike. Last year we were able to help thousands of people within our industry through challenging times thanks to the generosity of our supporters, both large and small.”

All funds raised will directly contribute to Hospitality Action’s mission to provide help, advice, and support to hospitality workers with whatever challenges they face – including physical illnesses, mental health issues, financial difficulty, family problems, and addiction.

In addition to the raffle, Lockhart Catering Equipment has donated over £10k to Hospitality Action as the events’ official charity partner.

Exclusive Brands
LOCKHART

A dedicated website about the event is now live at **www.cateringinnovationshow.co.uk** providing regular updates about exhibitors and keynote speakers, as well as a registration portal to secure a free ticket.

THE CATERING INNOVATION SHOW
BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE

ADIT stand 22

ADIT - the complete tableware solution, with Zwiesel Glas-Fortessa's award winning designs and superior quality. Our products are the choice of professionals around the World. We supply Zwiesel Glas, Schott Zwiesel & Eisch crystal glassware; Fortessa fine bone china, porcelain and stoneware; 18-10 metalware; co-polyester drinkware and Daff placemats. We can provide in-glaze badged chinaware, silver-plate and decorated crystal glass. Visit ADIT Stand 22, to see our latest releases: FUSION & MOVE ultra-fine stemware, BLYSS fine bone china; ICELAND stoneware and much more. To stand out from your competition, visit ADIT stand 22 and discover our difference

THESE ISLANDS
THE TOUCH
REMOTE P
TO STAY

RATIONAL Stand 43

Visitors to the stand will discover how Rational, the global leader in hot food preparation, transforms commercial kitchens with intelligent, high-performance cooking system solutions. Showcased will be the iVario Pro advanced bratt pan and iCombi Pro combi oven—together forming a complete kitchen system that streamlines workflows, enhances staff efficiency, and reduces food waste. At the core of Rational's innovation is ConnectedCooking, a digital platform enabling remote energy monitoring, HACCP compliance, and centralised menu management.

Lincat stand 68

At Lincat, we're proud to be at the forefront of catering innovation, designing equipment that combines performance, sustainability, and style. This year at the Catering Innovation Show, we're showcasing the Ignite Electric Chargrill – a game-changer for professional kitchens. Delivering the authentic taste and sear of traditional chargrilling with the efficiency and control of electric power, Ignite eliminates the need for gas while reducing environmental impact. Its sleek design, rapid heat-up, and consistent results make it ideal for chefs who demand both flavour and reliability. Discover how Lincat continues to ignite culinary creativity.

VICTORINOX

Victorinox Stand 59

The origins of Victorinox date back to 1884, when Karl Elsener opened a knifemaking workshop in a village in central Switzerland. Victorinox is now a fourth-generation family business operating in over 120 countries. In addition to its iconic pocket knives, Victorinox produces premium household and professional knives, watches and travel gear. Victorinox products embody the brand and ensure consumers are best prepared for everyday challenges by offering smart and masterful solutions.

DUAL GRIP - FIRST-CLASS HANDLE FUNCTIONALITY

Designed for chefs and meat processors, the Dual Grip collection features Swiss-made, NSF-certified knives with ultra-sharp stainless steel blades and dual-component, non-slip handles. Built for precision, safety, and durability, each knife withstands intensive daily use in professional kitchens, slaughterhouses, and HoReCa environments—delivering comfort, control, and long-lasting performance.

ACCP: FOOD-SAFE KNIVES

Hygiene and food safety are top priorities in kitchens and meat processing. Victorinox makes day-to-day work easier with practical, HACCP-compliant solutions that meet the most demanding requirements – thanks to NSF certification, as well as colour- and QR-coded knives that differentiate between individuals or food groups.

VICTORINOX

BLUE SEAL®

Blue Seal Ltd Stand 48

Blue Seal Ltd is very mindful of the future equipment requirements for efficiency, carbon footprint and sustainability, with this ever-changing food industry and the cost of gas and electric usage. We currently produce a new range of free-standing & bench models of heavy-duty induction hobs with two or four zones. Each hob has the versatility of 3.5KW or 5Kw round zone generators for focussed power or 5kw power full area zones to accept multiple pans across the cooking area. The induction technology is incredibly responsive, with hardened 6mm thick glass cooking surfaces. Blue Seal R&D is conscious of the ever-increasing demand for induction product and is in the process of launching new induction- convection ranges, and wok induction hobs.

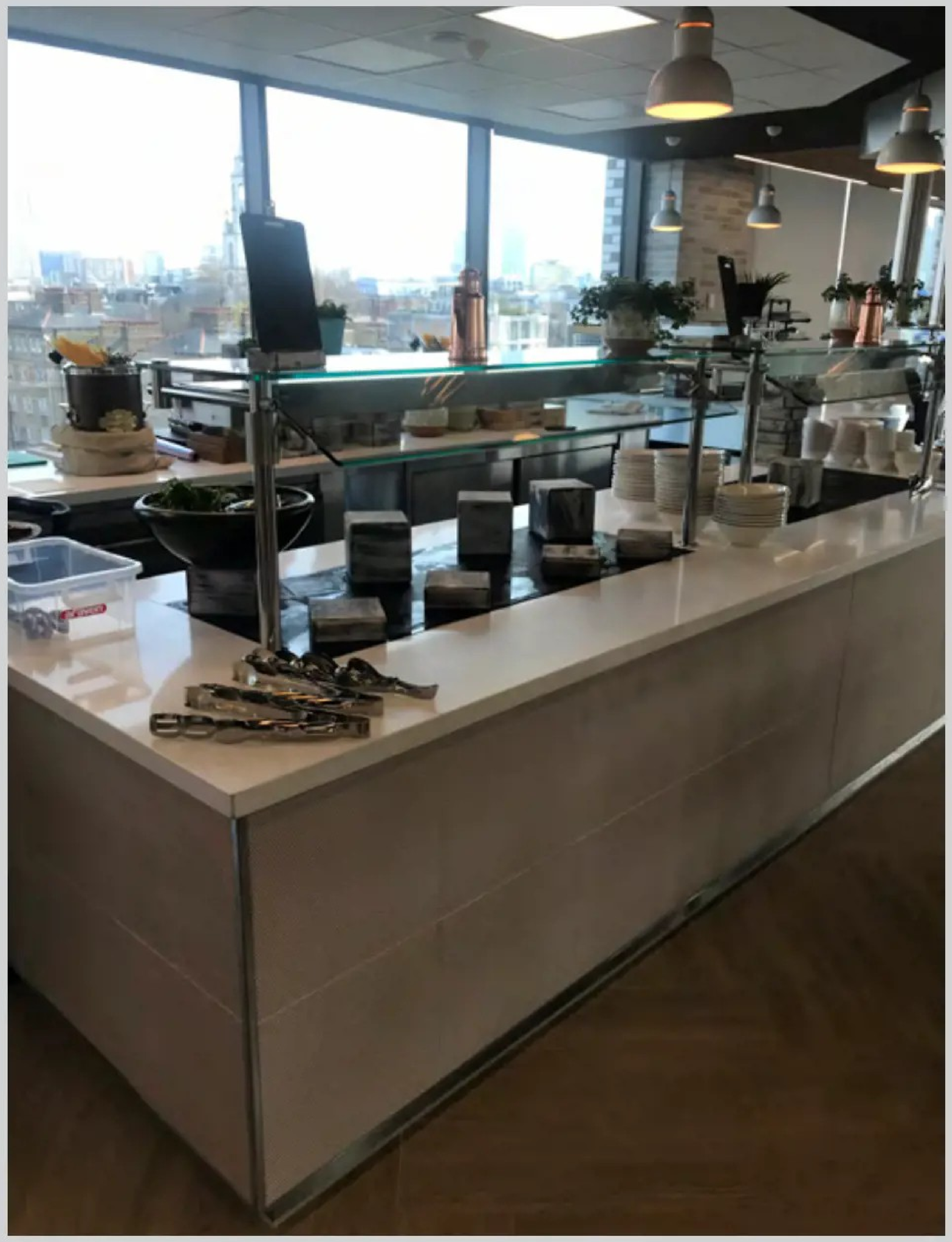
SERVING PROFESSIONALS

Elia Stand 33

Elia International is excited to join the Catering Innovation Show 2025. With decades of experience supplying the hospitality industry, Elia delivers high-quality, stylish, and durable products - ranging from cutlery and bone china to lead-free crystal glassware and barware. Each item is crafted to combine luxury with lasting performance. This year, Elia unveils its latest cutlery design: Cellene. Made from 18/10 stainless steel, Cellene features sleek curves and a textured, debossed pattern that's both visually striking and comfortable to hold. Ideal for modern table settings, it reflects Elia's commitment to innovation. Visit Elia at stand no. 33.

Catertherm
Innovation in foodservice

EXPERTS IN FOOD DISPLAY



Catertherm Stand 2

Catertherm is proud to be showcasing its latest food display innovations at the Catering Innovation Show, including our cutting-edge Hot & Cold Plates, stylish Heat Lamps, heated and chilled Food Transport Trolleys, and the versatile AluChef cast aluminium cookware range. Our solutions are all high quality and designed to optimise space and elevate presentation – trusted by professionals across the catering industry. Visit us on Stand 2, October 28th in Islington, to see our full range of products.

Catering Innovation Show

BELOW IS A FULL LIST OF EXHIBITORS AND STAND NUMBERS:

Adande	**Stand 64**
ADI	**Stand 22**
Aggora	**Stand 38**
Amefa	**Stand 25**
Araven	**Stand 14**
Arc	**Stand 25**
Ariane	**Stand 42**
Blue Ice	**Stand 57**
Blue Seal	**Stand 48**
Bolero	**Stand 35**
Bolsius	**Stand 53**
Botinkit	**Stand 49**
Cambro	**Stand 62**
Catertherm	**Stand 2**
CED Fabrications	**Stand 19**
Churchill	**Stand 15**
Dalebrook	**Stand 13**
Denby	**Stand 70**
Elia	**Stand 33**
Emile Henry	**Stand 6**
Fagor	**Stand 30**
Falcon	**Stand 58**
FEM	**Stand 31**
Foster	**Stand 52**
Gastronomy Plus	**Stand 63**
Harfield	**Stand 12**
Hillbrush	**Stand 1**
Hobart	**Stand 44**
Hovicon	**Stand 50**
Lafont	**Stand 23**
Lifetime Brands	**Stand 7**
Lincat	**Stand 68**
Lumea	**Stand 60**
Mechline	**Stand 69**
Metcalfe	**Stand 40**
Middleby	**Stand 5**
Mitchell & Cooper	**Stand 17**
MKN	**Stand 27**
Nevilles	**Stand 54**
PFR	**Stand 55**
Pujadas	**Stand 32**
Rak Porcelain	**Stand 56**
Rational	**Stand 43**
Regale Microwaves	**Stand 8**
RH Hall	**Stand 20**
Robot Coupe	**Stand 36**
Roller Grill	**Stand 29**
Rubbermaid	**Stand 65**
Scanbox	**Stand 16**
Shoes For Crews	**Stand 71**
Steelite Utopia	**Stand 51**
Tablecraft	**Stand 53**
Thunder Group	**Stand 34**
True Refrigeration	**Stand 21**
Unox	**Stand 46**
Valentine	**Stand 45**
V&B	**Stand 9**
Victor	**Stand 18**
Victorinox	**Stand 59**
Waring	**Stand 24**
Wearertech	**Stand 26**
Wedgwood	**Stand 66**
Welbilt	**Stand 39**
Wellocks	**Stand 4**
Williams	**Stand 37**
Winterhalter & Classeq	**Stand 61**

Jason Atherton
MICHELIN
2024

Jean Delport

Tom Shepherd
MICHELIN
2024

Simon Rogan
MICHELIN
2024

Hospitality Action

In addition to the exhibitors the event will also encompass a Live Theatre run by Chef HQ, which will host exciting cooking demonstrations from leading chefs, expert-led stimulating debates, and best practice advice around several topics including sustainability.

Kickstarting the day, Row on 5's Jason Atherton and Spencer Metzger will be bringing the heat from 10am. Upstairs' Tom Shepherd, and Interlude's Jean Delport will then be taking to the stage later in the day, with 3 Michelin-star L'Enclume's Simon Rogan MBE and Core's Clare Smyth MBE finishing the day off in style!

The afternoon is set to see a panel of experts engage in a think-tank around 'The Future of Casual Dining Concepts', with Wagamama's Steve Mangleshot set to join other leading casual dining brands as well as Hospitality Action on stage.

BELOW IS A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR THE DAY

10am	Chef Demo with Jason Atherton and Spencer Metzger
10.30am	"What defines a Memorable Dining Experience?"
11.15am	Chef Demo with Jean Delport
12.00pm	Chef Demo with Tom Shepherd
1.00pm	National Chef of the Year
1.45pm	"The Future of Casual Dining"
2.30pm	Chef Demo with Simon Rogan MBE
3.15pm	Chef Demo with Clare Smyth MBE
4.00pm	Raffle Prize Draw

Hospitality Action

walk for wellbeing.

WALK FOR WELLBEING STANDS AS AN ANNUAL REMINDER THAT MENTAL HEALTH, PHYSICAL WELLBEING AND HUMAN CONNECTION ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE.

Founded in 2020 by Craig Prentice and Sean Wheeler, this grassroots initiative was created to shine a light on wellbeing in hospitality and support the indispensable charity, Hospitality Action. In just a few short years, it has grown from humble beginnings into a nationwide movement bringing together people from every corner of the UK.

We at Tonic Talent are incredibly proud to be stepping into our sixth year of hosting the Birmingham Walk. This event isn't just another date in our calendar; it reflects who we are and what we really care about. Every day, we see the pressures and challenges faced by people working in hospitality, which is why supporting Hospitality Action is so important. For us, it's about more than walking; it's about showing up for our industry.

"It's an honour for Tonic Talent to be hosting the Birmingham Walk for Wellbeing for the sixth year running. Hospitality Action is a cause very close to my heart, I am a proud ambassador for the charity, and I'm incredibly proud of the support our team, clients, and partners have given over the years. Birmingham has an extraordinary hospitality community, and each year I'm blown away by how people from every corner of the sector come together – walking side by side, raising awareness, and making a real difference for our industry." – Conrad Brunton, Managing Director, Tonic Talent

HOW IT STARTED

The idea for Walk for Wellbeing was born at a moment when many were feeling isolated, anxious and unsure – during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitality professionals, accustomed to bustling kitchens, front-of-house chatter, and being part of vibrant teams, suddenly found themselves separated from colleagues, worried about their livelihoods, and, in some cases, struggling with mental, emotional, and financial strain.

Craig Prentice saw both a need and an opportunity. Drawing on his background in hospitality recruitment and his leadership within the community, he wanted to create something simple but powerful: a walk.

"Walk for Wellbeing was born during the pandemic, when so many of us in hospitality were facing challenges to our mental health, wellbeing, and sense of connection. The initiative is about bringing people together, shedding light on the importance of looking after each other, and raising vital funds to support the incredible work of Hospitality Action. Human connection, physical movement, and simply being outdoors can make such a difference – and this event celebrates all of that.

"Now in its sixth year, Walk for Wellbeing is about making a positive impact: on ourselves, our colleagues, our industry, and the number of people Hospitality Action can support. This October, you can join one of the hosted 20km walks taking place across 12 cities: Bath, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Cornwall, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, and York, or take part by 'Walking It Your Way' between World Mental Health Day (10 October) and Sunday 26 October. I encourage everyone to get involved and help us walk the walk and make a positive difference together." - Craig Prentice

GROWTH AND IMPACT

What started with small groups in 2020 has evolved into multiple hosted walks in cities across the UK, with new locations joining each year.

The initiative serves as a beacon, inspiring hospitality employers to pay more attention to wellbeing, embed better support systems and foster open dialogue around mental health. The walk has now been gifted to Hospitality Action and is part of the charity's flagship programmes, which will help it scale even further in the years ahead.

"Walk for Wellbeing has become a cornerstone of our industry's commitment to mental health. Now in its sixth year, it stands as both a flagship fundraising event and a unifying movement across hospitality. The funds raised are more vital than ever, providing support for colleagues across the sector who are struggling during challenging times. With more locations than ever before, Walk for Wellbeing is a powerful reminder of what we can achieve together." - Hospitality Action

WHAT'S COMING AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Looking ahead, Walk for Wellbeing is broadening its reach. More cities across the UK are signing up to host walks. The walks offer flexible participation options, so that even if you can't make a city event, you can join in from wherever you are.

GOALS

At its heart, the initiative is about more than fundraising. It's about well-being in every sense:

*** Connection and community.** Whether registering for a hosted city walk or choosing the flexible "Walk It Your Way" option, the idea is that people don't feel alone. Hospitality is a people business, and this event brings people together - colleagues, friends, family - walking side by side.

*** Physical and mental health.** Fresh air, movement, stepping away from screens and kitchens, these things matter. They help reduce stress, boost mood, and support mental health. Encouraging people to walk, talk, and share helps normalise conversations around mental wellbeing.

*** Raising Awareness.** The walk draws attention to the challenges hospitality workers often face – from financial hardship to mental-health struggles and isolation. It helps to ensure these issues are not hidden but openly discussed.

*** Fundraising for vital support.** Proceeds from Walk for Wellbeing go directly to Hospitality Action, which provides grants, counselling, a helpline and emergency relief for people in the industry who are in crisis.

Here are some of the ways you can take part:

* Sign up to walk – either at a hosted city walk or "Walk It Your Way."

* Join as a team from your workplace, restaurant, hotel or bar – or simply walk with friends and family.

* Volunteer along the route – cheer, guide walkers, help with safety and logistics.

* Fundraise – through sponsorships or donations.

* Champion wellbeing at work – encourage walking meetings, de-stress days and open conversations.

Every step, every conversation, every pound raised helps. It helps someone in the sector who may be struggling, it builds community, and it shifts culture.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW MORE THAN EVER

The hospitality industry continues to face rising costs, staffing challenges and the ongoing ripple effects of economic uncertainty. The toll on well-being – both mental and financial – is real. Isolation, burnout, anxiety and depression are sadly all too common in this sector. With that in mind, Walk for Wellbeing isn't just a walk; it's a lifeline.

By coming together, speaking out about wellbeing and supporting Hospitality Action, the event ensures that those in crisis aren't alone and that, as a community, hospitality shows up for its own.

Let's walk the walk and make a positive difference together
walk for wellbeing.
powered by
mum.
talent taken care of
in support of
Hospitality Action

THE CALL TO ACTION

Whether you're someone in hospitality, a friend, a family member or simply a supporter of people's mental health and wellbeing, Walk for Wellbeing is for you. Lace up your walking shoes. Walk somewhere you love. Invite a friend. Talk about why this matters. Support the fundraising. Volunteer. Share the message. Let every step count.

Because in the end, it's not just about walking. It's about walking together, for something that matters: your wellbeing, your community and the bright future of hospitality.

Register for Walk for Wellbeing today. Let's walk the walk and make a positive difference together.

For more information and to register, please visit **www.walkforwellbeing.org.**

Westminster
Capital City College

Chef Lecturer Jose Souto

wins Royal award at The Game Fair

CHEF JOSÉ SOUTO HAS RECEIVED THE BASC PRINCE PHILIP DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IN RECOGNITION OF HIS WORK EDUCATING FUTURE CHEFS ABOUT GAME PRODUCTS.

Senior Chef Lecturer in Culinary Arts at Capital City College (CCC)'s School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, Jose Souto, has been recognised by a conservation organisation for his work in encouraging emerging chefs to prepare and cook game products.

Jose, who currently teaches second and third year students on Professional Chef Diploma courses, was awarded the BASC Prince Philip Distinguished Service Award at The Game Fair which took place at Ragley Hall in late July.

"It can be quite a challenge for chefs to cook with game, as it's a little bit outside the norm. So, chefs need to understand a little bit more about the background of the product they're using. Game meat is very low in fat, so it's very healthy, but that presents challenges in terms of how you cook it, so you must bear that in mind. It's nutritional and has lots of vitamins and minerals, so it's great for a healthy diet. Also, it's a natural product that's produced by the countryside around us rather than being forced or fed chemicals or steroids to make it grow. It's a slow growing, very natural product. Over the 20 years that I've been with the college, we've worked hard to highlight the benefits of eating game and its various uses. We've incorporated it into our curriculum as a seasonal product and given so many students a background in game that they would not otherwise have had. We're making sure that our students understand those products and can use them, which is important as they're very much on trend at the moment.

"Game suffers from lots of misconceptions. Nowadays we tend to understand the product so much better and when we're looking at ethical, sustainable meats that are healthy, game tops that list"

"I received a letter earlier in the summer that notified me I was to be presented with this award – but I couldn't tell anybody! It was formally presented to me by the chairman of BASC during The Game Fair and it's great to be recognised for all the hard work that we've done.

"Prince Phillip himself was a great advocate of eating natural produce such as game. I remember speaking to him once about it. He was enthusiastic about using natural ways of cooking - barbecuing and grilling - because he really enjoyed it himself. So, it was a real honour to be highlighted with an award in his name." C

Capital City College

wk
Westminster Kingsway College
Holloway

“Cooking is a lifelong journey of learning and discovery”
Auguste Escoffier

“It all begins at WestKing”

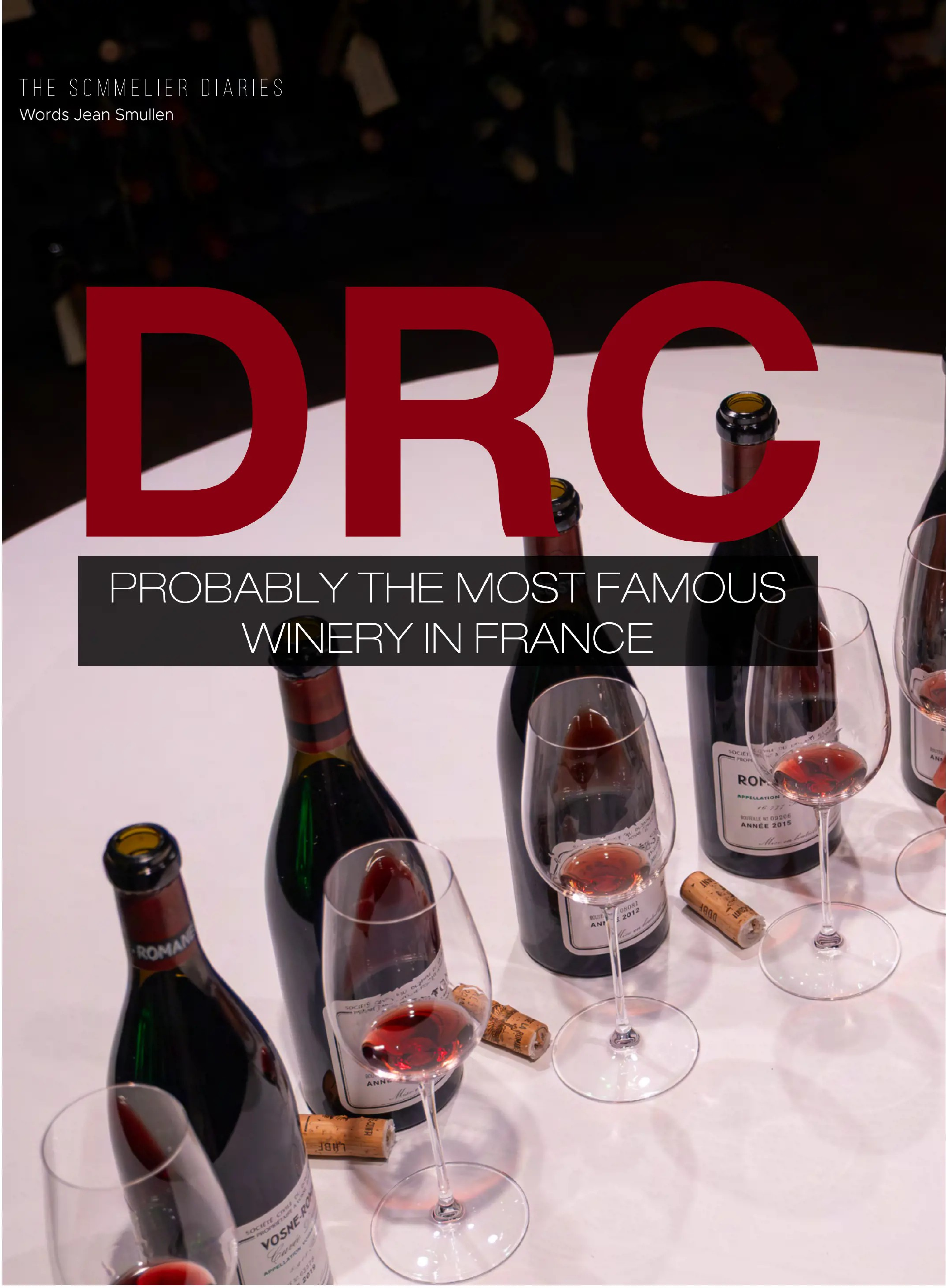
THE SOMMELIER DIARIES

THE SOMMELIER DIARIES

Words Jean Smullen

DRC

PROBABLY THE MOST FAMOUS WINERY IN FRANCE



MONOPOLE
2016
MONOPOLE
2015
LA TÂCHE
APPELLATION LA TÂCHE CONTROLÉE
ANNÉE 2016
ÉCHÉZEAUX
2017

FINE WINES FROM THE BURGUNDY ARE AS SCARE AS HEN'S TEETH AND AS THE DEMAND FOR WINES FROM ONE OF FRANCE'S MOST SOUGHT-AFTER FINE WINE REGIONS CONTINUES TO GROW.

This year, Heston Blumenthal created a world class dish using the wines of one of the region's most famous estates, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, for an event held at The Fat Duck in July 2025.

Burgundian wines are much sought after for several reasons, primarily the scarcity of suitable vineyard land, and more specifically because of the growing global demand for the region's esteemed, site-specific wines.

Bernard Pivot, a well-known French journalist summed it up, when he said "In Burgundy, when you talk about "climats", you do not lift your eyes to the sky, you lower them to the ground." Producers in Burgundy explain their "climats" and "lieux-dits" with a religious fervour. To the un-initiated, these mystical descriptions can seem daunting though realistically they are just describing the lay of the land. The term "climat" is simply the Burgundian definition of "terroir".

The Burgundian passion for their land was rewarded by UNESCO in 2015 when 1,247 named Burgundy vineyards, known as the "Climats de Bourgogne" were added to the World Heritage Site list. A "climat" is a specific plot of land with a precisely defined geological and climatic limit which when combined with human intervention helps to create the great red and white wine made in the region.

The term "lieux-dit" translates literally as a defined location and refers to the specific name of a small plot of land, usually uninhabited, which was named either for an historical event or a geographical characteristic. This is VERY important to know when you visit Burgundy, as literally walking from one field to another can take you from the ordinary to the extraordinary in terms of wine quality. As early as the 7th century, celebrated wines were already recognised simply by their names.

Since the Middle Ages, the reputation of Burgundian wine spread all over Europe thanks in part, to the influence of the monks of the Citeaux and the Dukes of Burgundy. Certain wines acquired a reputation that reached way beyond French borders, which brings me to Domaine de la Romanée-Conti (DRC), without doubt one of the most exclusive wine producers in the world.

ST-VIVANT
ROMANÉE-ST-
MAREY-MONG
ANNÉE 2015

MONOPOLE
2015
MONOPOLE
2016
SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE DU DOMAINE DE LA ROMANÉE-CONTI
PROPRIÉTAIRE A VOSNE-ROMANÉE (COTE-D'OR) FRANCE
LA TÂCHE
APPELLATION LA TÂCHE CONTROLÉE
16.644 Bouteilles Récoltées
ANNÉE 2015
21.770 Bouteilles Récoltées
ANNÉE 2016
LES ASSOCIÉS-GÉRANTS
Mise en bouteille au domaine
VIVANT
ANNÉE 2017

The domain's flagship is the Romanée-Conti Grand Cru, with a price tag of several tens of thousands of euros per bottle, has everything to do with the wine's sublime quality and its cult status. The production consists of only 5,000 bottles per year due to the size of the I.8-hectare vineyard.

All wines from DRC are highly sought after. Probably the most famous winery in France, DRC can be found in the Côte de Nuits east of the town of Nuits-Saint-Georges. Domaine de la Romanée Conti is co-owned by the de Villaine and Leroy/ Roch families, who bought the vineyard of La Romanée Conti in I869. The domaine is today run by Aubert de Villaine and is usually referred to in Burgundy as 'DRC' or "the Domaine".

While the Burgundian terroir and the vineyard categories are complex, when it comes to grape varieties, the region is easier to understand. The red varieties are Pinot Noir and Gamay, the white" varieties are Chardonnay and Aligoté.

Pinot Noir it is one of the oldest grape varieties in the world, a red grape with distinctive "pinecone-shaped" clusters, it is known for producing elegant, complex wines. The flavour profile includes red fruit, and some wines can have earthy notes of mushroom, and some have floral characteristics reminiscent of a Peony rose. Due to its thin skin, it is a notoriously difficult grape to grow, as it is prone to fungal diseases, earning it the nickname the "heartbreak grape" It tends to produce its best wine on well drained soils in

The Pinot Noir grape is a particular favourite of Heston Blumenthal's, so he and his team took a deep dive into the flavour profile of this famous grape

The dessert was revealed at an exclusive Fat Duck/DRC wine event as part of the restaurant's 30th-anniversary celebrations. The Pinot Noir dessert is a multifaceted dish with numerous components that draw from the complexity and flavor profile of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's prestigious wines.

Just like Heston's complex dessert, the 2025 vintage in Burgundy looks to be a standout one. The harvest commenced on August I8th and was completed on September 20th.

Reports emerging from the region indicate that while yields were lower than expected, overall producers were pleased with the quality of the juice.

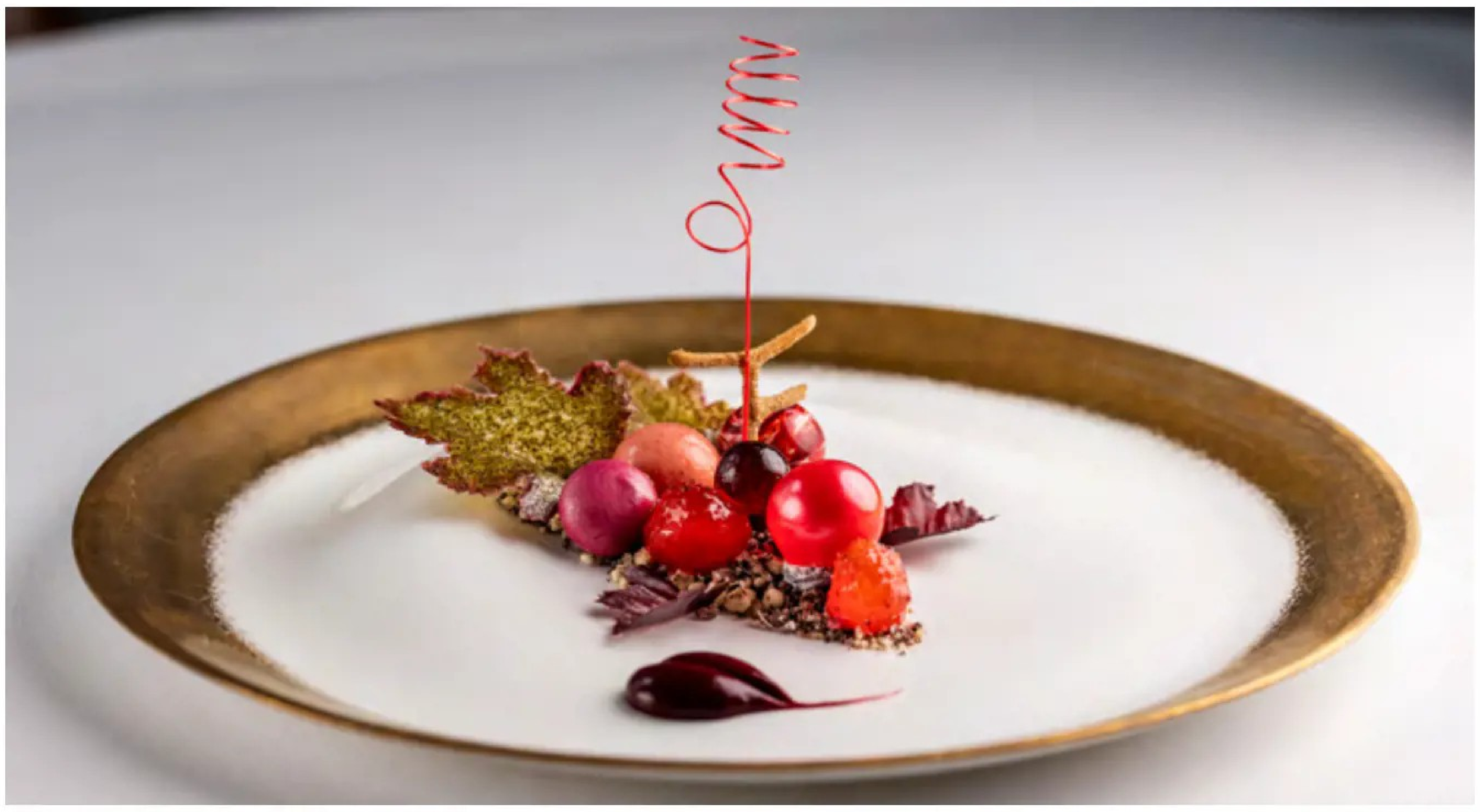
After a complicated 2024, the 2025 vintage unfolded under far better conditions, despite a few weather incidents. Following a moderate winter, weather conditions remained favourable throughout the growing cycle, and 2025 quickly established itself as one of the earliest vintages in recent decades.

Two heatwaves, in June and August, accelerated berry ripening and brought excellent maturity, though they did reduce yields. Producers and négociants in Bourgogne now have everything they need to shape the standout wines of the 2025 vintage. This will most likely mean that prices will rise and there will be a great demand for the region's premium wines.

Words Claire Bosi

Pinot Noir

THE PINOT NOIR GRAPE IS THE FOUNDATION OF MANY OF THE GREATEST WINES OF BURGUNDY, AND A PARTICULAR FAVOURITE OF HESTON BLUMENTHAL'S.



So, he and his team took a deep dive into the flavour profile of this famous grape, tasting, testing, exploring and experimenting. The result? To commemorate a special Domaine de la Romanée-Conti event held at The Fat Duck in July 2025 - a dessert called 'Pinot Noir'

This beautiful dessert is composed of many elements to capture the grape's complex character.

Featuring many elements this complex dessert, which took months to develop and contains over 55 stages of preparation, was revealed at an exclusive Fat Duck-DRC wine event as part of the restaurant's 30th-anniversary celebrations and remains a feature on the autumn a la carte menu.

Key Elements of the Dessert

The Pinot Noir Grape dessert is a multifaceted dish with numerous components, including:

Tobacco ganache, leather, rose, strawberry, long pepper, red wine fizzy grape, blackcurrant meringue, churros dusted with cep, blackberry leaves, Parmesan, truffle, vanilla salt, cocoa nibs and cherry pate de fruit.

Development and Presentation

The dessert draws inspiration from the complexity and flavor profile of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's prestigious Pinot Noir wines. The dish required a significant development period, with the Fat Duck development, pastry and sommelier team taking months to refine the concept.

The creation is considered the restaurant's most complicated dessert to date, with over 55 individual preparation stages involved.

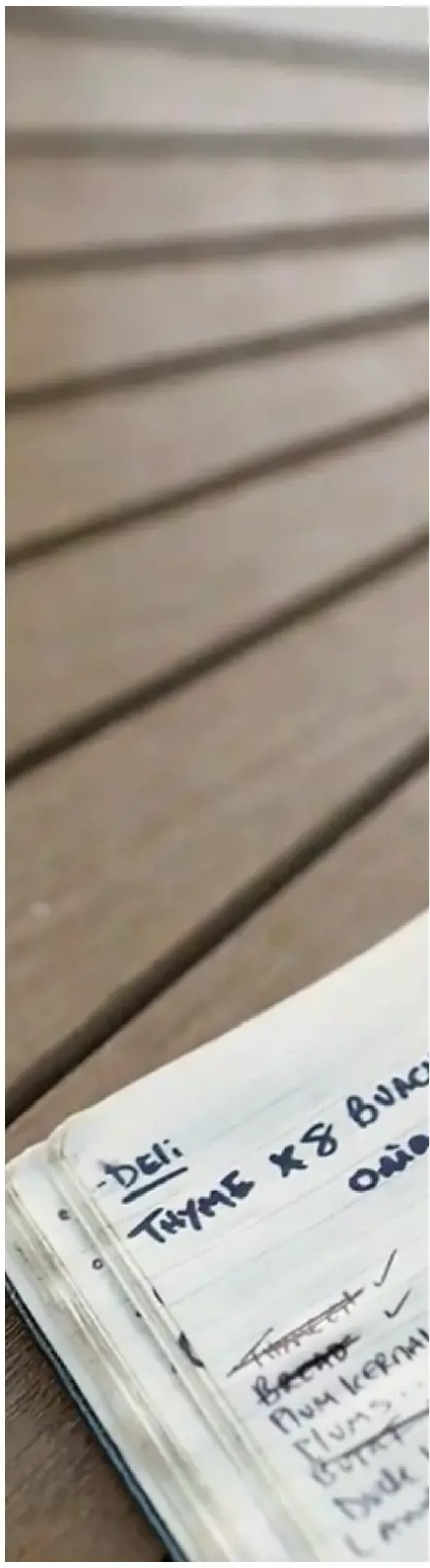
Gastronomixs
Empowering chefs to create

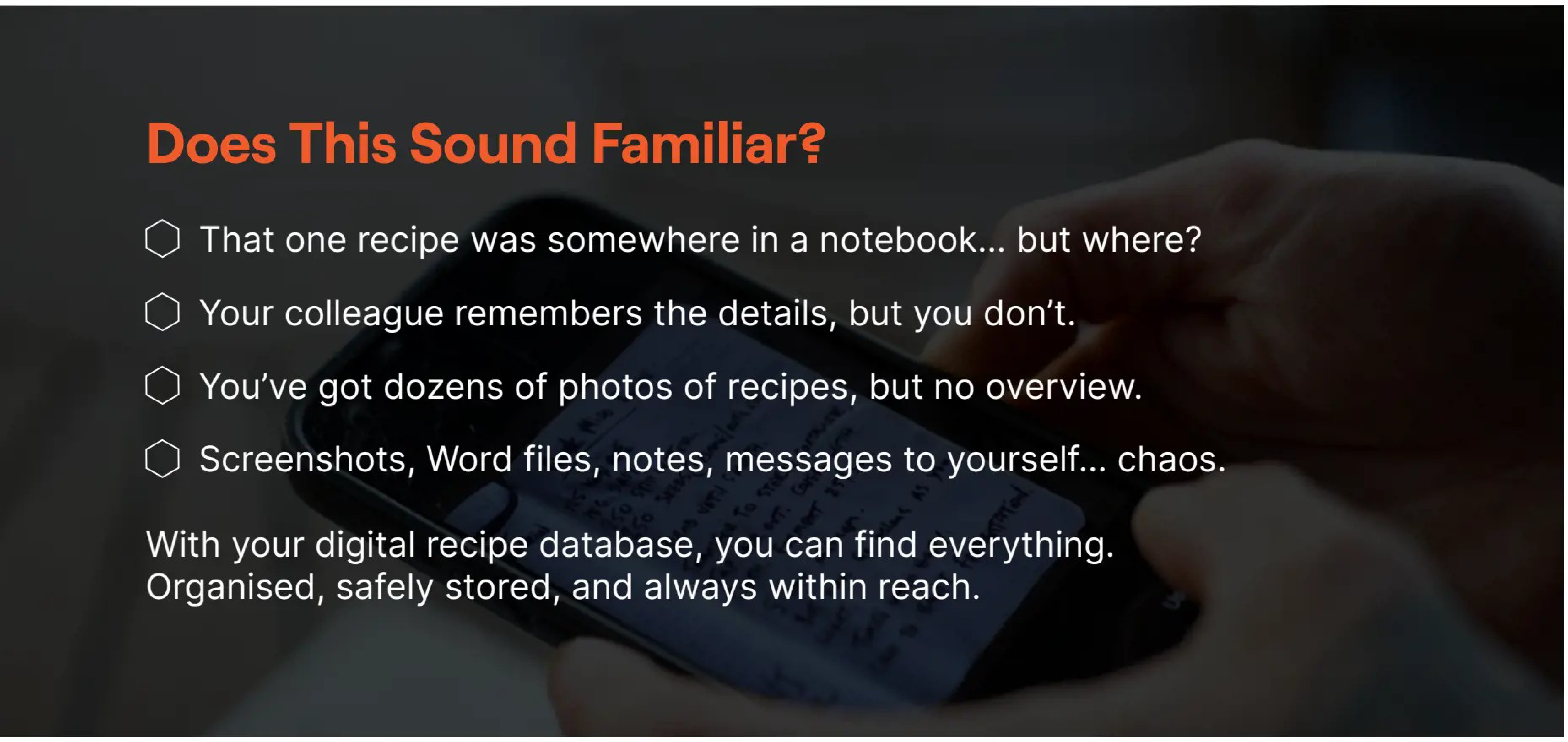
Hey chef, typing out recipes is a thing of the past!

As a chef, you have **creative ideas** every day. But where do you keep them? In a notebook, as a photo on your phone, in a folder on your laptop or as a message to yourself? Before you know it, you lose track of them. That's a shame, because your recipes are worth their weight in gold.

Recipes are more than just a method and a list of ingredients. They are **proof of your creativity**, a reflection of everything you have developed over the years. You want to keep them in one place, so you can use your creativity in a focused way.

Recently, Gastronomixs.com launched a new feature that digitises, structures and secures your recipes in seconds. Moreover, they provide **ultimate convenience:** typing out recipes is a thing of the past! Believe us, you want to give this a go...!





Does This Sound Familiar?

- ⬡ That one recipe was somewhere in a notebook... but where?
- ⬡ Your colleague remembers the details, but you don’t.
- ⬡ You’ve got dozens of photos of recipes, but no overview.
- ⬡ Screenshots, Word files, notes, messages to yourself... chaos.

With your digital recipe database, you can find everything.
Organised, safely stored, and always within reach.

From photo to usable recipe – in seconds

Adding your own components to Gastronomixs is quick and easy:

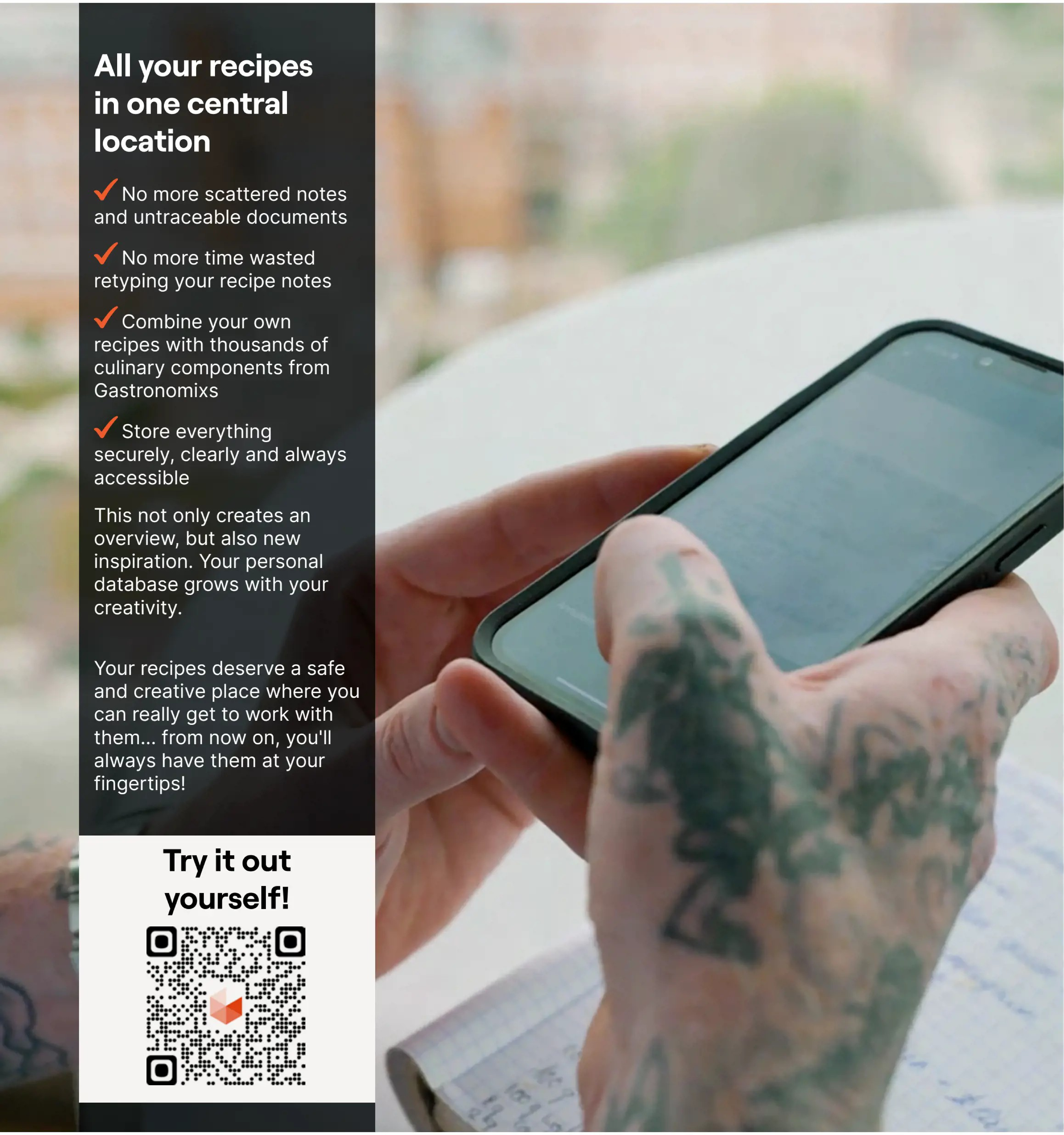
Step 1: Upload
Take a photo or upload a document of your recipe (e.g. Word and PDF).

Step 2: Automatically structured and enriched
Within seconds, your recipe is converted into a complete and clear format: ingredients, method,
yield – everything neatly organised.

Step 3: Ready to use
Check, edit or add to where necessary and save the recipe in your personal environment.

18G SALT
250 STILL WATER
250 SEEDS(
BLEND UNTIL SMOOTH.
TRANSFER TO STERILE CONTAINER
TAP AIR OUT. COVER WITH
CLOTH. FERMENT 25/30°.
5 DAY MINIMUM.
BUT CAN GO ASLONG AS YOU
WANT.
TASTE WHEN HAPPY.
CHILL TO HAULT FERMENTATION.

1280 A/J



All your recipes in one central location

✓ No more scattered notes and untraceable documents

✓ No more time wasted retyping your recipe notes

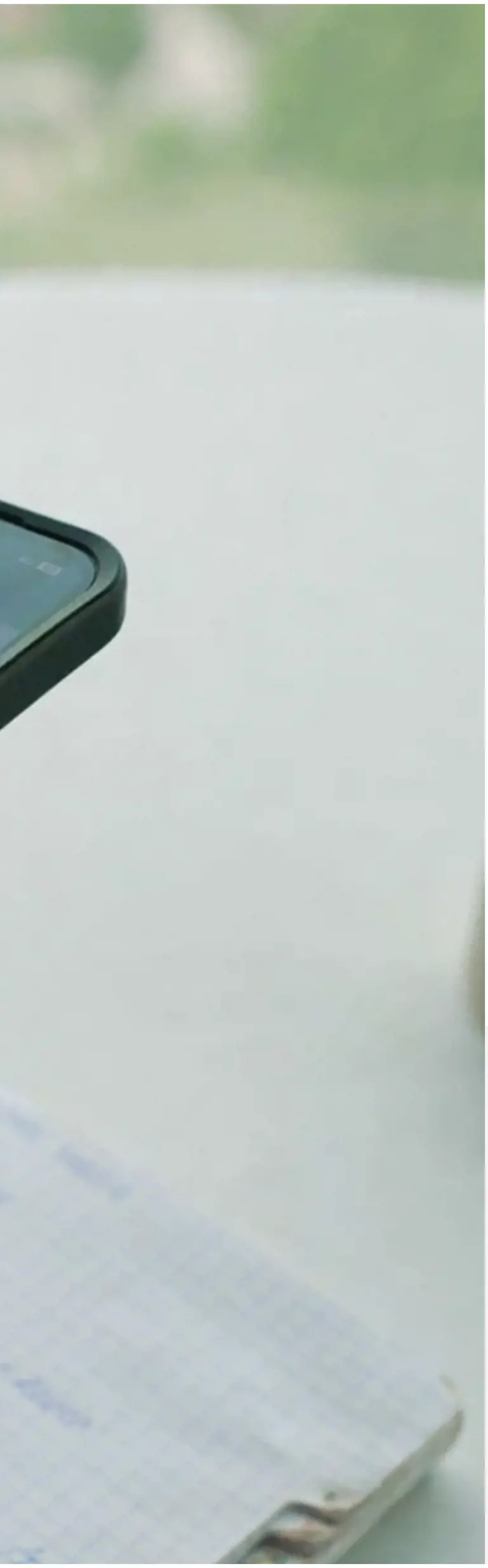
✓ Combine your own recipes with thousands of culinary components from Gastronomix

✓ Store everything securely, clearly and always accessible

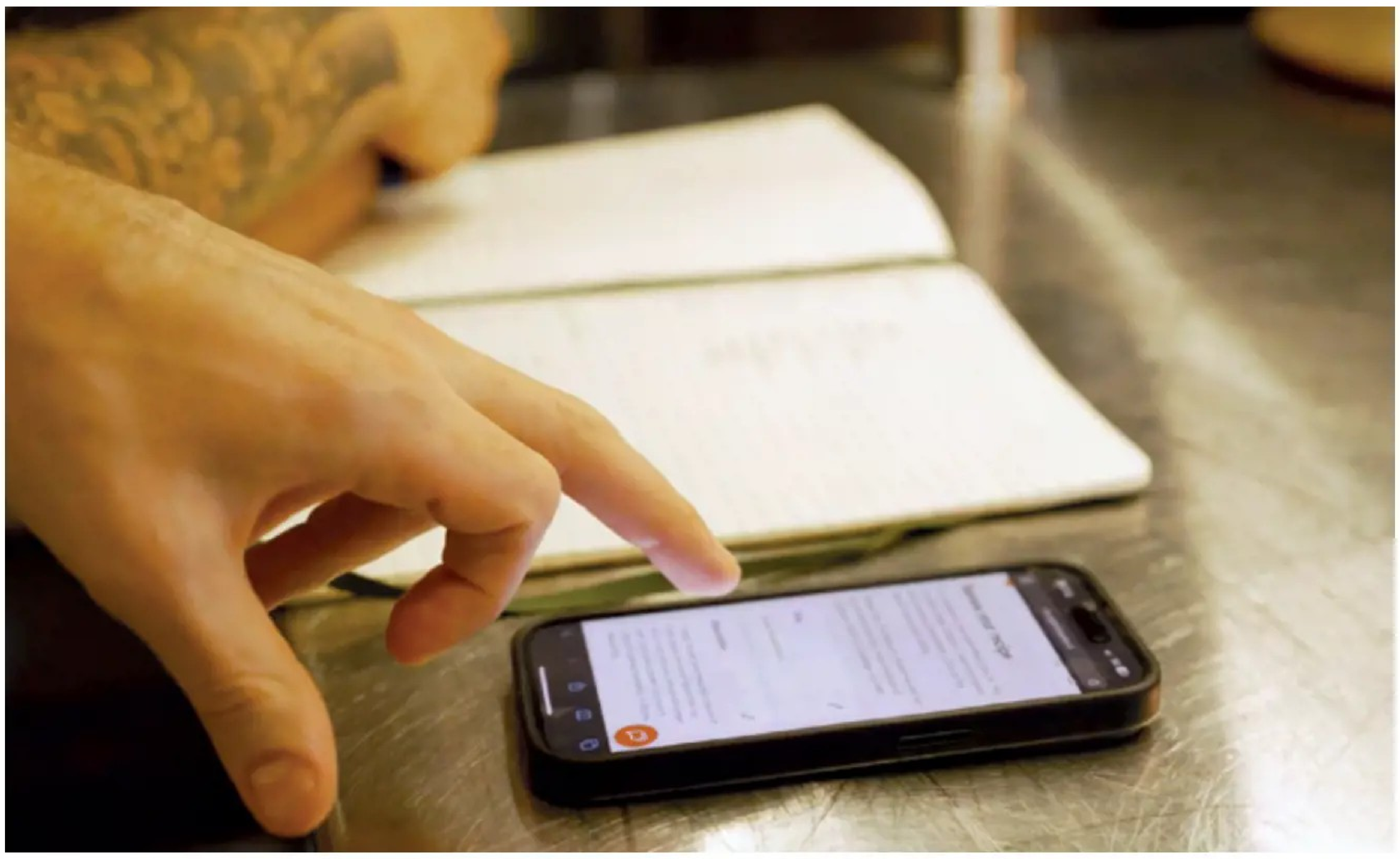
This not only creates an overview, but also new inspiration. Your personal database grows with your creativity.

Your recipes deserve a safe and creative place where you can really get to work with them... from now on, you'll always have them at your fingertips!

Try it out yourself!



> **“I uploaded a photo of a recipe, and it turned into a beautiful, organised, and readable recipe with a clear method. It even generated a description and yield. Wow. That’s incredible.”**
>
> - Luke French, JÖRO restaurant, Sheffield



More about Gastronomixs

Gastronomixs is so much more than just a place to store your recipes. It’s **the ultimate online knowledge and inspiration platform for professional chefs.** With Gastronomixs, you can:

- Access over 6,000 culinary components to inspire and expand your dishes
- Combine your own recipes with ready-to-use building blocks
- Get weekly, chef-tested recipes to stay ahead of the curve

Explore in-depth knowledge articles, curated collections, and seasonal calendars

Hey chef,

ready to uncover your full creative potential?

Gastronomix
Empowering chefs to create

RECIPES

STEAMED OYSTERS ON
SEAWEED WITH SALTY
COFFEE COCKTAIL
MOAI CAVIAR, ROCK
CHIVES®, SEA FENNEL
BY LEONARD ELENBAAS
AND ERIC MIETE

AUTUMN COCKTAIL
HONNY® CRESS
BY ANTONY BERTIN

AUTUMN COCKTAIL
HONNY® CRESS
BY ANTONY BERTIN

YOUNG OYSTER
MUSHROOM, DASHI &
LUPINE TOPS
LUPINE TOPS, SHISO
LEAVES GREEN
BY ERIC MIETE

STEAMED OYSTERS ON SEAWEED WITH SALTY COFFEE COCKTAIL

MOAI CAVIAR, ROCK CHIVES®, SEA FENNEL

By Leonard Elenbaas and Eric Miete

By glass

COFFEE COCKTAIL

INGREDIENTS

- 2 parts coffee
- 1 part seawater
- 1 part islay whiskey (smoky)
- 1 part Sea Fennel syrup
- 1/3 part protein
- 1 part crushed ice

METHOD

Measure all ingredients in a jigger, add all parts together in a shaker and finally the ice cream.
Shake this well in the cup for 15 seconds.
Pour this without the ice into a tumbler just below the rim.

OYSTER

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Zeeland Creuses
- 1/8 Cucumber
- 1/4 lime (lime juice)
- 1/4 cup Rock Chives
- 1 pinch ground pepper
- Teaspoon of olive oil
- 1 piece Moai Caviar
- 1 sprig of Sea Fennel

METHOD

Place the oyster on the big green egg at 210°C until it opens.
Remove the oyster with an oyster knife and drain the liquid.
Juice the cucumber in the slow juicer.
Mix the juice together with the lime juice, the ground pepper and the olive oil to form a dressing.
Spoon the dressing over the oyster and top with a sprig of Moai Caviar and a sprig of Sea Fennel.
Serve the shell on the glass with the cocktail.

Big
Green
Egg

KOPPERT CRESS
Architecture Aromatique

AUTUMN COCKTAIL

HONNY® CRESS

By Antony Bertin

KOPPERT CRESS
Architecture Aromatique

Dead leaves underfoot. Fresh air tinged with moisture. Newly sprouted mushrooms and enchanted forest moss. Welcome to the little house lost in the autumn forest.

INGREDIENTS

- Calvados VS
- Routin chestnut syrup
- Artisanal apple juice
- Porcini mushroom liqueur & Honny Cress
- Green citron
- Dry cider & sea salt
- Rainwater spray

RAINWATER SPRAY

INGREDIENTS

- 100 ml spring water or filtered water
- 1 small sprig of lemon thyme or wild thyme
- 2 g dried mushrooms (shiitake or cep)
- 1 small piece of oak bark or a piece of untreated wood.
- Fleur de sel

METHOD

Gently heat the water with the thyme, mushrooms and bark.
Leave to infuse over a low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, covered.
Leave to cool, then strain carefully through a fine sieve or coffee filter.
Add a pinch of fleur de sel.
Pour into a small spray bottle.

PORCINI MUSHROOM LIQUEUR & HONNY CRESS

METHOD

Rehydrate 50g of dried porcini mushrooms by soaking them in warm water for about 30 minutes.
Drain the porcini mushrooms and squeeze them to remove excess water.
Then place the rehydrated cep mushrooms in a clean, dry jar and add 500 ml of vodka.
Add a vanilla pod split in half and 2 large handfuls of Honny cress.
Close the jar tightly and leave to infuse in a cool, dark place for about 2 to 3 days.
Shake the jar from time to time to mix.
After 2 to 3 days, prepare a sugar syrup by mixing 350 g of sugar and 500 ml of water in a saucepan.
Bring to the boil and simmer gently until the sugar is completely dissolved.
Strain the alcohol infusion to remove the cep mushrooms and other solid ingredients.
Use a fine sieve or cheesecloth to obtain a clear liquid.
Mix the strained infusion with the cooled sugar syrup.
Adjust the sweetness by adding more syrup if necessary, according to your taste.

ARTISANAL APPLE JUICE

Artisanal apple juice is cloudy apple juice.
There is nothing better when it comes to tasting.
Not to be confused with mass-produced apple juice, which is generally extremely sweet with a very low apple content.

YOUNG OYSTER MUSHROOM, DASHI & LUPINE TOPS

LUPINE TOPS, SHISO LEAVES GREEN

By Eric Miete

KOPPERT CRESS
Architecture Aromatique

INGREDIENTS

- Young oyster mushrooms (whole)
- Lupine Tops
- Kombu
- Shiso Leaves Green
- Black tea
- Lime

METHOD

Make a clear dashi by letting kombu and black tea simmer together in hot water (do not let it boil). Then add Shiso Leaves Green.
Season the broth to taste with a little lime juice and possibly some lime zest for freshness.
Strain the dashi and keep warm.
Clean the young oyster mushrooms.
Prepare them briefly (e.g. steam or lightly roast) to preserve their structure.
Decorate by sticking the Lupine Tops into the oyster mushrooms, as if they were growing out of them.
Place the oyster mushrooms with the Lupine Tops in the centre of the plate.
Carefully pour the warm dashi around and over the dish and serve.

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